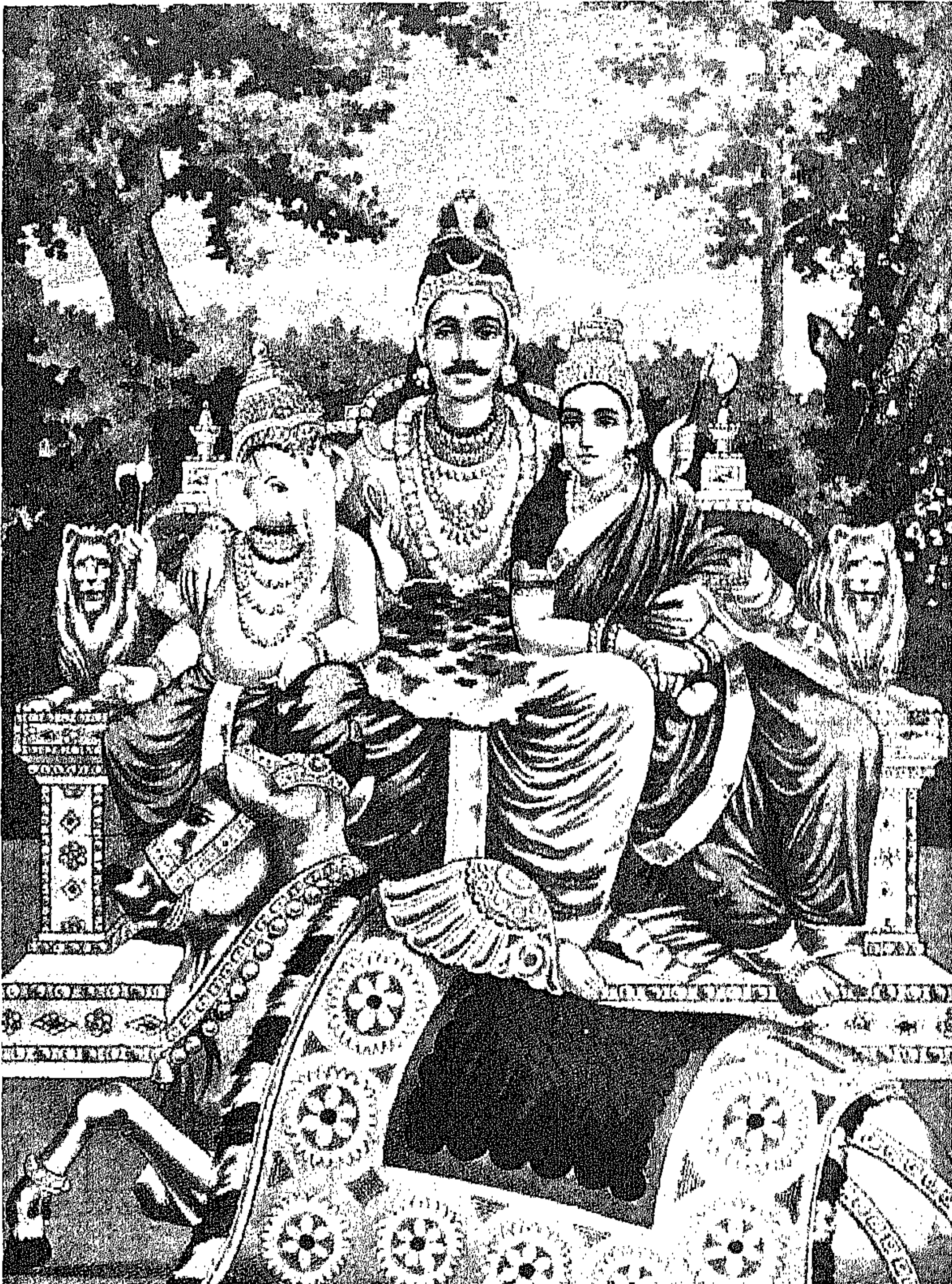
INCOMPARABLE INDIA



SHIVA, WITH HIS CONSORT, HIS SON GANESH, AND NANDI, THE SACRED BULL

Frontispiece]

INCOMPARABLE INDIA

TRADITION; SUPERSTITION; TRUTH,

BY
COLONEL
ROBERT J. BLACKHAM
C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.
Companion of the Most Eminent Order of The Indian Empire.
Kaiser-i-Hind Medallist for Public Service in India.
Formerly on the Staff of the 1st. (Peshawar)
Division, and of the Viceroy, and
seconded for Civil Employment
under the Government of
India.

WITH A FOREWORD
BY
FIELD MARSHAL
SIR WILLIAM BIRDWOOD, BARONET,
G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., M.A., LL.D., D.C.L.
Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge. General, Commonwealth of
Australia Military Forces. Formerly The Commander-in-
Chief of the Army in India; Member of the Executive
Council of the Govenor-General; Member
of the Council of State of India.

LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO. LTD.

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY PURNELL AND SONS
PAULTON (SOMERSET) AND LONDON

अतुलनीय भारत

Incomparable India

"I have eaten your bread and salt.
  I have drunk your water and wine.
The deaths ye died I have watched beside,
  And the lives ye led were mine.

Was there aught that I did not share
  In vigil or toil or ease,—
One joy or woe that I did not know,
  Dear hearts across the seas?

I have written the tale of our life
  For a sheltered people's mirth,
In jesting guise—but ye are wise,
  And ye know what the jest is worth."

KIPLING.

FOREWORD

by

FIELD-MARSHALL SIR WILLIAM BIRDWOOD, Baronet,
G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., M.A.,
LL.D., D.C.L.

THE pen is said to be mightier than the sword, but very few of those who have spent their lives in the service of the sword take kindly to the service of the pen.

Colonel Blackham seems to be one of those exceptions which prove the rule.

Since leaving the service of the sword, he has undertaken such work as the clerkship of one of our great City Companies and has devoted his leisure to writing books.

He has now fulfilled what I believe to have been a life-long ambition and produced a book on India from material which he has collected throughout many years of service in that country.

He has, I think, proceeded on admirable lines in that he has tried to describe the peoples, their manners and the customs of the great sub-continent with sympathy and understanding.

Far from attempting to belittle the great religions of India, he speaks with reverence of the Mystic Might of Hinduism and the Splendid Simplicity of Islam.

No Hindu could be offended at his genial sketch of Hindu mythology, or the conclusion he draws that the Hindu Scriptures represent notable stages in the progress of the human mind towards spiritual and religious evolution. Similarly, none of his Moslem friends can grumble at his tribute to the growth and development of the Faith of the

Prophet, and his tribute to modern developments in Islam. He says that nowadays progress is the watchword from the minaret: schools and colleges have been established, notably the great university at Aligarh, while Hindus of the lower castes are being invited into the Moslem Brotherhood.

Whilst attempting to do justice to these two great religions, he has not failed to record the efforts of reformers to improve them, and has a very sympathetic section on the Christian Missions.

This is, perhaps, only to be expected from Colonel Blackham as he may be said to have been a missionary himself, though he did not preach the Gospel of any single Faith but the universal Gospel of Humanitarian Hygiene.

As he has recorded in one of his own books, he was Honorary General Secretary of the St. John Ambulance Association for many years before the War, and was sent round India more than once to urge Heads of Provinces and Rulers of States to spread instruction in simple methods which would save life and preserve health. During the early days of the War he developed the great organisation of St. John into a Red Cross Society, for it is well to remember that India had no body of this nature till 1916. His success is a matter of Indian history, and his non-sectarian missionary work gave him unique opportunities of getting to know the country and its people.

It must be obvious that he could never have induced Indians to take up ambulance work, and popular instruction in health matters or to devote their time and money to Red Cross work, if he had not been in sympathy with their mentality and their ideals.

This book shows that his aims are still the same. He tells the story of India in a manner quite free from any trace of hostile criticism and sketches India's history with a friendly pen, while he justly emphasizes the terrible chaos into which India was plunged by the Fall of the Moghul Empire.

His chapter on Swords in the Jungle brings out the state of affairs which existed when—almost against her will—Britain became the paramount power in India.

Colonel Blackham opens and closes on the note that the Glory that is India is due to British influence which, for the first time in history, has welded a continent of warring races into such semblance of a Nation as now exists, and made Nationalism an ideal worthy of achievement.

I wish the book God Speed.

W. R. Birdwood,
Field Marshal.

Peterhouse,
Cambridge.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

My most vivid recollection of early days in India is a visit to an Indian town during the great Festival of the Diwali—the Feast of Lamps. Every house "blazed" with little earthenware vessels containing oil and a lighted wick, and groups of men and women were assembled along the river bank setting these little lanterns afloat on tiny rafts and watching with intense interest the frail craft as they floated downstream.

My friends were unable to give me much information about this picturesque festival, and it was only after much searching on the dusty bookshelves of a Station library that I was able to discover that the festivity was in honour of Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, the second person in the great Hindu Trinity. I learnt that the fate of the little lamps placed on the breast of Mother Ganges was pregnant with auguries of the future fortunes of the pious Hindus who consigned them to the stream, and that during the illuminations the bankers and merchants counted their rupees and worshipped them as symbols of the goddess, who is the patron of prosperity and whose influence guides the commercial ventures of her votaries.

Since that far-distant night, I have lost no opportunity of collecting information with regard to the great country in which I have been destined to spend most of my life. I have been fortunate in seeing more of India than most Indian officials or merchants, whose experiences are often confined to one province or even a single district, as my duties as Secretary of a great Empire-wide humanitarian organisation took me not once but many times to all parts

of the country, and gave me unique opportunities of seeing the life of Indian people in all its phases.

In these pages I have tried to describe first the glory that is India, for I am convinced that most people in this country fail to realise the immensity of India and its supreme importance in that great community of free peoples which owes the title of Empire first and foremost to the great sub-Continent of India. Far be it from me to belittle the great Dominions peopled by descendants of our own race, but important as they are, by comparison they are but little lamps beside the blazing Star of India.

Having pictured the greatness of India, I will sketch its varied peoples, their gods, their demons, their magicians, their holy men and their shrines, and record poetic and curious customs, such as the worship of rivers and trees. I love India and I love her peoples, but I would be unfair if I did not record those faults which it is the aim of all enlightened Indians to remove.

I must mention her belief in ghosts, her dread of evil spirits and the evil eye, her haunted villages and haunted trees, her quaint marriage customs and her amazing management of women during childbirth.

We must face the facts, and India, wonderful as she is, has still whole tribes devoted to crime, and modern Thugs who make poisoning a trade.

Widows no longer sacrifice themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres, but I shall show, as Kipling has done in one of the best of his short stories, that often it would be almost better if they did.

Western medicine has many brilliant exponents amongst Indians, but there is still a large section of the Indian people who believe in indigenous systems of medicine which were familiar in Europe in the days of Chaucer.

A brief reference must be made to the European Condottieri of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whose swords cut loopholes in jungles of rapine and misgovernment bringing in a little light and air.

Credit must surely be given to those merchant adventurers from England, who, against their will and in disobedience to their superiors, welded the warring nations of India into something like a homogeneous whole.

A chapter must be allotted to the missionaries, who, since the days of Francis Xavier, have brought new messages of hope to many Indians and who are carrying out their service to India more sympathetically and more devotedly than ever before.

Lastly, I have devoted a chapter to the present situation in India, and tried to show the political crisis as I see it since Mr. Gandhi obtained the remarkable position he now holds throughout the sub-continent.

I have been mindful throughout of the fact that I have countless Indian friends, and have served side by side with Indian soldiers. I have striven to:

> "offer memorial thanks
> To the comrades who fought in our
> dauntless ranks."

There is nothing in these pages which might not have been written by an Indian pen.

In his heart of hearts, the progressive Indian must realise what has been effected by British administration in little more than a century.

He must agree that "without the unifying influence of British administration—a dynamic force of extraordinary power in view of the many and startling diversities of the Indian continent—no political Constitution, such as that which is now in sight, would have been conceivable."

I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the various authorities mentioned in the Bibliography from whose learned writings I have quoted freely, but must specially mention that invaluable publication, *The Indian Year Book* and the splendid Special Indian Number of *The Times.*

My veteran comrade of the Tirah Campaign in 1897, Colonel W. B. Lane, C.I.E., whose knowledge of India is great and varied, has favoured me by reading the typescript.

But I am specially honoured by the encouragement of that great statesman, soldier and scholar, Field-Marshal Sir William Birdwood.

The friendship of the Field-Marshal is one of my most precious possessions, and he has placed the seal of his approval on this introduction to the study of India by writing a very gracious Foreword.

I take this opportunity of thanking the distinguished Master of Peterhouse for his great kindness and condescension, and can only hope that this book may be successful in presenting to English readers a faithful sketch of Incomparable India.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

INCOMPARABLE INDIA

CHAPTER I

THE GLORY THAT IS INDIA

"Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,
Balking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.
Stand to your work and be wise—certain of sword and pen,
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world of
men!"

"Great is the sword and mighty is the pen,
But over all the labouring ploughman's blade—
For on its oxen and its husbandmen
An Empire's strength is laid."

—KIPLING.

THE history of the great sub-continent we know as India is a fitful pageant sparkling with romance, at times, blood-stained, and sordid often: it is very little understood by Englishmen who are repelled by the remoteness and strangeness of the theme, and up till comparatively recent years, Indians themselves have neglected the subject as history plays no part in the traditional Sanskrit curriculum. It was left to Western scholars to decipher the inscriptions of Asoka, and to rescue from oblivion the caves of Ellora and the Ajanta frescoes.

With the new spirit of nationalism has come a fresh interest in the great antiquity of Indian civilisation, and Calcutta University has now a learned lecturer on Ancient Indian History and Culture who claims that some of the oldest hymns of the Hindus were written during the Pleistocene, or, at any rate, the post-Pleistocene, epoch,

and that from geological evidence the Vedic civilisation had its beginnings many thousand years ago and was at its height during probably the Seventh Millennium, before the Christian era, when most of the hymns were composed. He suggests that the Vedic Aryans were the original inhabitants of the prehistoric Land of Seven Rivers, which was completely cut off from Southern India by a sea which covered modern Rajputana and extended as far as Assam.

India has many historical monuments, some of which go back to the third century before our era, but the great relics of the past hitherto known are almost modern compared with the recent discoveries at Mohenjodaro in the Indus Valley, and Harappa in the Punjab. Indeed, the discovery in 1923–4 of material demonstrating that there had been, in the North-Western portion of the country at any rate, a hitherto entirely unsuspected and astonishingly elaborate civilisation as long ago as the fourth millennium B.C., aroused intense interest throughout the scientific world, and may truly be said to be one of the most suggestive and important of the many fine achievements of modern archaeology.

The explorations at Mohenjodaro, carried out under the supervision of Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archaeology in India, have revealed a large area, some twenty-three feet below the surface, which marks the site of a highly organised city. It is now possible to walk through the streets and to enter many of the buildings as easily as did the original inhabitants more than four thousand years ago.

The structural remains at Harappa were fewer, but the excavators recovered numerous antiquities including large numbers of seals and sealings, bearing pictorial symbols, which obviously belong to a script. Certain of these seals and sealings are of great value and importance, as they show that the ancient culture of the Indus Valley was of a definite Indian type. It is hoped that these sites may eventually yield definite prototypes of Indian deities and

traces of cults which persist to the present day. As yet, unfortunately, the pictographic script has defied expert decipherment, but it is said that many of the signs bear a striking resemblance to the primitive signs found on the early Sumerian seals, which are quite intelligible to scholars. The most recent disclosures regarding the origin of this script show a remarkable similarity between the signs on these Indus Valley seals and a style of writing discovered in the Easter Island some sixty years ago by a French missionary, Father Eyraud. One of the most striking examples of resemblance between these two types is the sign of the swastika, which, in both cases, is very nearly identical.

Turning from pre-historic to historic times, excavations at Taxila have exposed four successive cities on one site. The latest of these was in occupation at the beginning of the second century B.C., when the Bactrian Greeks overran this part of the Punjab, and the second when Alexander the Great came to Taxila in 326 B.C., a fact that is demonstrated by the discovery in the second stratum of Hellenic pottery and of coins of Alexander and Phillip Aridaeus.

Indeed, the proofs which have come to light have led Indians to claim that the Vedic civilisation is the oldest in the world, and that the cradle of the Indo-Iranians in the valley of Kashmir and the plains of Septa-Sindhu is the cradle of the Aryan race. They even assert that the Vedic Aryans lighted the torch of civilisation which has been glowing for thousands of years for the benefit of the whole of humanity, and that though the younger civilisations of Babylonia, Assyria, Phoenicia, and Egypt have passed away, " India still remains because she has among other things, made the culture of the soul the supreme object and the guiding principle of her life."

It is not, however, till a few hundred years before Christ that we come to any authentic history of India. The picture presented is a peaceful land rich in herds and cultivated by a peasant population, ruled over by petty kings

and princes. Rich in minerals and precious stones, the soil had yielded to primitive methods of mining great quantities of the rarer metals which skilled craftsmen had manufactured into costly ornaments, which adorned the persons of the princes and the images of the gods, and the roofs of glittering temples. The fruitful soil yielded rich harvests and wealth accumulated readily in a lotus land.

Such a country fell an easy prey to the hosts of Alexander the Great in 326 B.C., but the great soldier only stayed in India about nineteen months and never went further south than the Punjab.

The invasion was productive not of Greek dominion but indirectly of the establishment of the first great Indian state of which we have knowledge.

A young Hindu, Chandragupta headed a national rising against Alexander's satraps and by his unscrupulous but skilful leadership made himself master of north-west India.

The result of his policy was that when the Syrians tried to repeat the Macedonians' exploits they found themselves confronted by a vast and homogeneous empire and an army better organized than their own. The result was an alliance instead of a conquest and a princess of the Royal House became the wife of Chandragupta, who flung aside old Hindu prejudices against marriage and intercourse with foreigners.

Indeed, he surrounded his throne with every symbol of Western splendour and relied for his personal safety on an Amazonian guard of gigantic Greek women!

He was a hard, cruel man, but established a great dominion characterized by the honesty of its merchants and the skill of its craftsmen.

To this vast heritage Asoka succeeded in the third century before Christ. He became a convert to Buddhism and set himself to remodel his kingdom on the precepts of the Dharma. Fortunately, the details of this great experiment have not been lost in the oblivion which has swallowed up so much of the early history of India; the

Emperor's injunctions, regulations, and homilies were recorded in edicts which were issued from time to time and were inscribed upon rocks, or pillars erected for the purpose, in various parts of the country. The lofty moral tone of these edicts indicates clearly enough that India, in the third century B.C., was a highly civilized country; it must, indeed, have compared favourably with the rest of the world of the time, for Greece was sinking fast into a state of corrupt decadence, and Rome, in the throes of her struggle with Carthage, had scarcely yet emerged from barbarism. Education, too, must have been more widely diffused than in later ages; for the presence of these inscriptions, written in the vernacular, proves that reading was a common accomplishment.

Asoka reigned for forty years. He was a great builder. "His grandfather had made special arrangements for the protection and encouragement of the hereditary craft-guilds; Asoka taught them to work in stone. Hence his monuments are the earliest examples of Indian art which have survived the progress of time. The great tope at Sanchi, the noble lion-pillars at Sarnath and Lauriya-Nandangarh, and the exquisitely polished caves at Baraber near Gaya, are all that remain now of his extensive buildings."

The kingdom of Asoka fell to pieces at his death, but when Chinese pilgrims found their way to India centuries later, in the fifth and seventh centuries of our era, one of them records that he found great buildings with brazen roofs shining like gold, and their pillars and walls adorned with richly-chased silver. In one of them stood a Buddha of pure jasper, holding in his hand a pearl of unknown value; and the pilgrim gazing with awe at the ruins of Asoka's palace, declared that the gigantic stones with their elaborate carving were the work of no mortal hands.

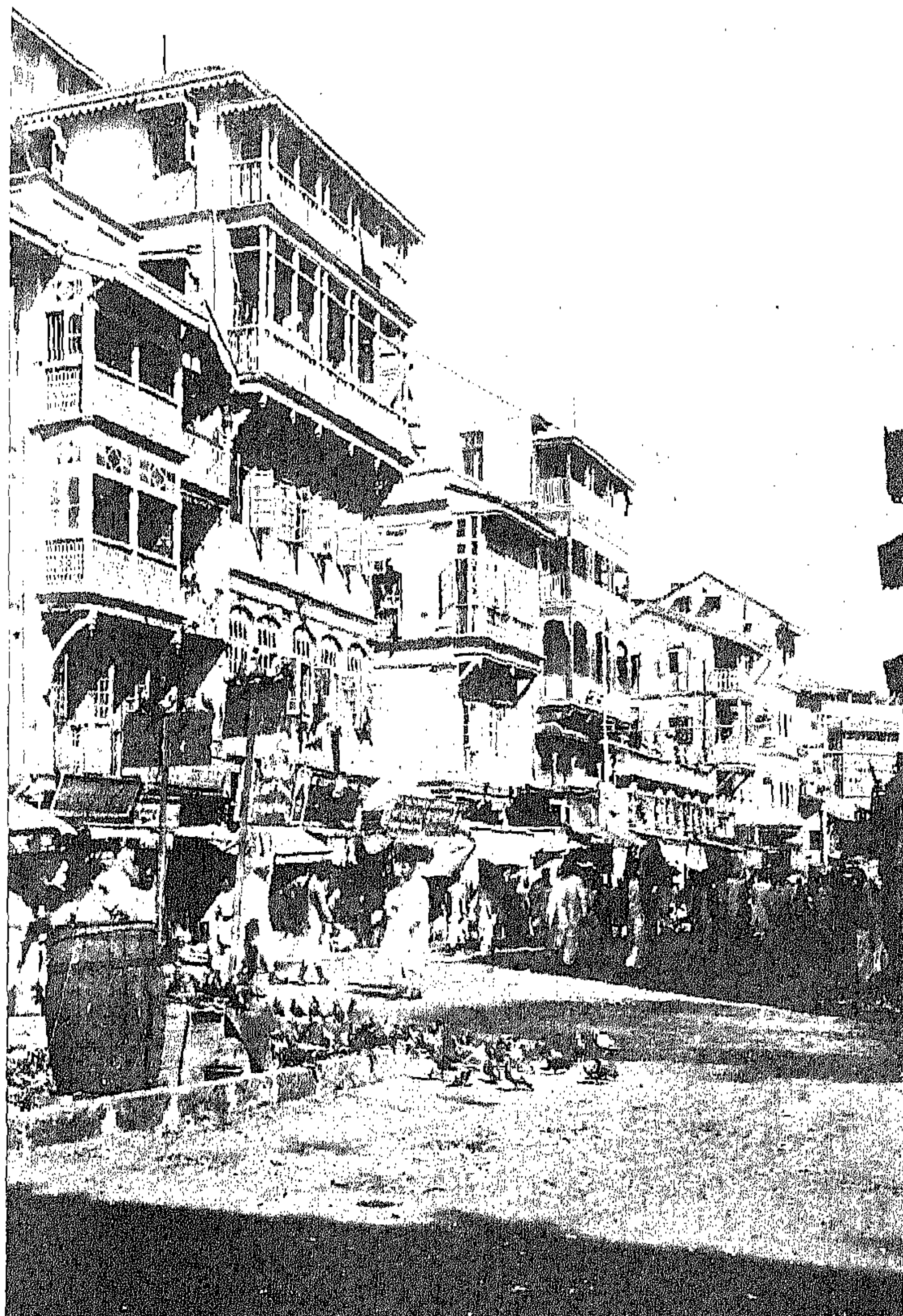
In the seventh century of our era arose another monarch capable of consolidating the petty chieftainships into an Empire. This was the Emperor Harsha, who, from

Thanasar near Ambala, conquered Northern India and extended his territory South to the Nerbudda. Imitating Asoka in many ways, this Emperor "felt no embarrassment in paying adoration in turn to Shiva, the Sun, and Buddha at a great public ceremonial." Of his times a graphic picture has been handed down in the work of a Chinese "Master of the Law," Hiuen Tsiang by name. Harsha was the last native paramount sovereign of Northern India; on his death in 648 his throne was usurped by a Minister, whose treacherous conduct towards an embassy from China was quickly avenged, and the kingdom so laboriously established lapsed into a state of internecine strife which lasted for a century and a half.

Meanwhile, in Southern India the Andhras had attained great prosperity and carried on a considerable trade with Greece, Egypt and Rome, as well as with the East. Their domination ended in the fifth century A.D., and a number of new dynasties, of which the Pallavas were the most important, began to appear. The Pallavas made way in turn for the Chalukyas, who for two centuries remained the most important Deccan dynasty, one branch uniting with the Cholas. But the fortunes of the Southern dynasties are so involved, and in many cases so little known, that to recount them briefly would be impossible. Few names of note stand out from the record except that of Vikramaditya in the eleventh century, and a few other Hindu rulers who tried to stem the flood of Islam.

From the seventh to the tenth century, chaos reigned in India, but the eighth century is notable for the appearance on the stage of history of the Rajputs, who spread from their original homes in Rajputana and Oudh into the Punjab and Kashmir assimilating numerous fighting clans and binding them together under a common code.

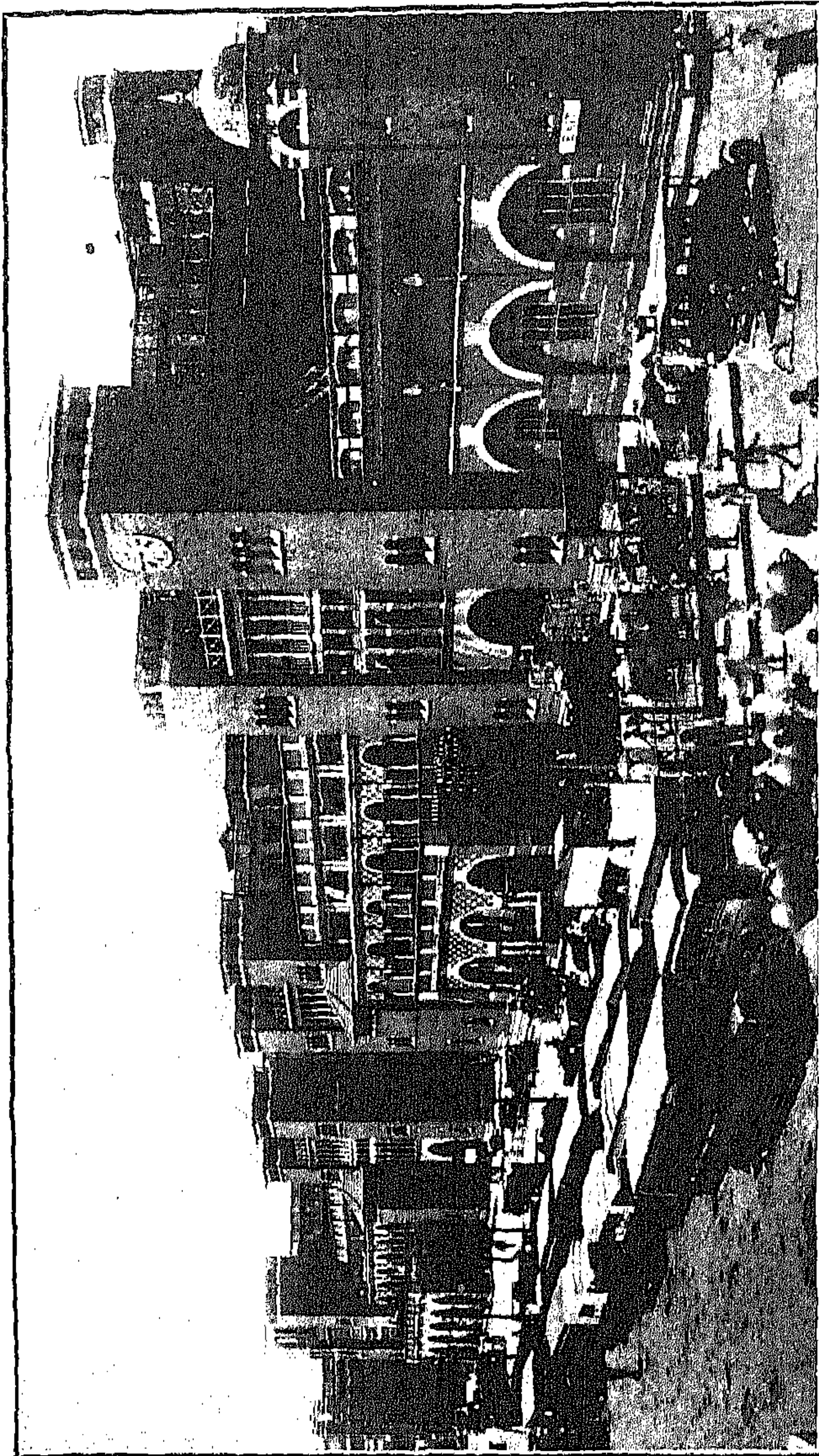
The Rajputs became the champions of the Hindus against the Mohammedans—who began to invade India in the tenth century—and evolved a civilization of which there remain memorials in the splendid temples and forts



[Photo: Indian State Railways

BAZAAR SCENE, BOMBAY

[Face page 6



STATELY CALCUTTA

[Photo: Indian Trade Publicity Office

Face page 7]

of Rajputana, but their dominion collapsed in the twelfth century before the all-conquering arms of Islam.

With many vicissitudes, the Mohammedan incursions into India culminated in the establishment of the Moghul Empire.

Of India's earlier Moslem invaders the less said the better. Under the cloak of religion they burnt, plundered and massacred a well-governed, prosperous and civilized people. But the India of their time deserved its fate, as wealth and ease had brought weakness and indolence in their train, and disunion between her defenders made them an easy prey to a united foe.

Babar, King of Kabul, was an invader of a different mould to the fanatical robbers who had preceded him; poet, knight errant, and adventurer, he established an Empire which stretched from the Ganges to the Oxus. He founded a race of poets. That poem in marble, the Taj Mahal, is an epitome of the artistic aspirations and achievements of a dynasty, which, whatever may have been its faults, fostered the arts.

Babar's grandson, Akbar, was a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, and his rule in India was as notable as that of the great Tudor sovereign. He was a born king of men, with a rightful claim to rank as one of the greatest sovereigns known to history. That claim rests securely on the basis of his extraordinary natural gifts, his original ideas, and his magnificent achievements. It is weakened, rather than strengthened, by the adulation of uncritical admirers.

First and foremost, he won over to his side his chief military rivals, the Rajputs. Great ruler as he was, he saw that he must have with him—and not against him—those "Sons of Kings" who had charged the Moghul guns at Panipat until the blood dyed their horses' chests. He married a Rajput princess, and in response to his overtures the flower of Indian chivalry threw the weight of their mighty swords into the balance of power in order to secure

settled government, and many Rajputs rose to high command in the armies of Akbar and his successors.

Only one Rajput state ventured to withstand the Moghul Empire. The Rana of Chitor bade defiance to the invader, and for months he withstood all attempts to capture his stronghold. Finally, however, Akbar stormed the town, after himself killing the brave commandant with a lucky shot from his favourite musket. The last stage of the struggle was characterized by an incident which Rajputs proudly recall. When the commandant was killed by Akbar's bullet, the command devolved on a youth of sixteen whose mother, like the Spartan mother of old, directed him to put on the "saffron robe," and to die for Chitor. But, "surpassing the Grecian dame, she illustrated her precept by example; and lest any soft 'compunctious visitings' for one dearer than herself might dim the lustre of Kailwa, she armed the young bride with a lance, with her descended the rock, and the defenders of Chitor saw her fall, fighting by the side of her Amazonian mother-in-law."

The House of Udaipur, though beaten, was unsubdued; the survivors fled to the hills and held out there, and to this day boast that they alone made no alliance with the conquering arms of Islam.

Akbar was not satisfied with the establishment of a mighty Empire or with a religious tolerance which was far ahead of anything that Europe attained until many years later. He aimed at giving India a universal religion. He sought:

"To gather here and there
From each fair plant, the blossom choicest grown,
To wreathe a crown, not only for the king,
But in due time for every Mussulman,
Brahmin and Buddhist, Christian and Parsee,
Through all the warring world of Hindustan."

Needless to say, he met with fierce opposition from Hindu and Moslem alike, but opposition merely strengthened

his resolution to carry out what he regarded as a divine mission. He declared himself Head of the Church and decided to announce the New Universal Faith in the great cathedral mosque itself. Rawlinson says it is not difficult to picture the scene. In front stands the great crowd: the bright March sun lights up the glittering uniforms, the many-coloured turbans, the gleaming marble canopy of the Saint. Akbar, a simple figure in a white robe, only ornamented with a single gigantic diamond—the Koh-i-noor, gift of the House of Gwalior—in his aigrette, mounts the pulpit beneath the aisle. He begins to intone the solemn litany composed by Faizi:—

"The Lord to me the Kingdom gave,
He made me prudent, strong, and brave,
He guided me with right and ruth,
Filling my heart with love of truth,
No tongue of man can sum His state,
Allahu Akbar! God is great."

"But as Akbar began to chant the great hymn, his emotions overwhelmed him. He saw, in his mind's eye, a united India, a race untorn by religious controversy or racial prejudice. 'One fold and one shepherd.' It was too much. He faltered, stopped, broke down utterly, and abruptly left the pulpit. The awed crowd remained in respectful silence until the service was taken up by a member of the courtly circle and finished."

So ended Akbar's dream as his son Salim, the child of many prayers, born of Akbar's union with the Rajput lady, and destined, as his father fondly hoped, to unite in his person Mohammedan and Hindu, turned out an idle and dissolute brute, with none of the virtues and all the vices of both great races.

It is appropriate that here we should turn to the fascinating pages of our own history which tell the story of the development of British influence in the East. Three

years after the death of Akbar—in 1608 to be exact the first English ship entered the port of Surat.

England was late in the field.

Many had dreamed of finding an ocean highway to the Orient, but it was the Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama, who first climbed past Mozambique, tacked round the Cape of Storms, and threw his little vessels into the unknown ocean to light on the long-sought Indian shore.

The Portuguese sought commerce and not territory, but dynastic troubles betrayed their little kingdom into the hands of Spain. Spain, however, wanted gold and not trade and she had a bitter enemy who wanted the very trade which Spain despised. Holland, the trader, displaced Spain, the despoiler, but close on the heels of the Dutch came the roving English, stirred by the achievements of Drake and his compatriots.

Indeed Drake may be looked on as the inspiration of the Indian Empire for "The Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies" which was founded a few years before the death of Queen Elizabeth based its operations largely on the work of Drake, as it was he who captured the Portuguese vessels which disclosed the long-kept secrets of the Indian trade.

The Company first turned its attention to Malaysia but eventually its efforts were concentrated on the Indian mainland. Here the Company built a Fort at Madras in 1640, in 1669 acquired Bombay from Charles II, and in 1696 built Fort William at Calcutta.

The English Company had serious rivals at first in the Dutch and later in the French companies.

We will not attempt to trace the romantic story which tells how the English Trading Company carrying out not only commercial enterprise with its officials, but military operations with its own troops—for no King's troops reached India till 1754—gradually absorbed the whole of the Indian Peninsula. Dutch enterprise and French intrigue broke against the courage and resource of the

English traders and to-day the once powerful French influence is represented by a little province on the Coromandel coast and a small town near Calcutta. Portugal still holds Goa, a tract of 1,000 square miles south of Bombay, Daman, a few square miles on the Gujrat coast, and a small island, called Diu, whilst the efforts of other nations to establish dominion in India are now mere memories.

Having glanced at its history, let us endeavour to realize the Glory that is India to-day.

At the outset, it must be again insisted that India is not a mere country but a continent. This is the first fact that the reader must grasp if he desires to appreciate the dazzling brilliance of the brightest jewel in the British Crown.

Simple enough in outline, India contains nearly every extreme of nature that the tropical and temperate zones between them can produce; mountain ranges of unexampled height and grandeur; reeking delta swamps of fantastic size, clothed with rank vegetation and dissected by innumerable shifting creeks; vast tracts of pathless hill country and virgin jungle; great open plains, traversed by correspondingly great rivers, where the eye ranges unimpeded round the level circle of the horizon, over a landscape which may be all green luxuriance and fertility or as sterile as the sandy wastes of Arabia; temperate regions where terraced hillsides yield reluctant harvests of wheat and other Northern crops; regions of stone and cactus, where the heat is the heat of a furnace, but intermittent; regions of perpetual steamy warmth, where rice and cotton, jute and coffee and palms, grow with tropical exuberance on soils of exceptional fertility. And presiding over the whole of this variegated scene, and profoundly affecting it, is the fierce Indian sun, which only relaxes its oppressive rule where the far Northern frontiers rise to meet the everlasting snows.

It has an area of more than one million, eight hundred thousand square miles, and a population of three hundred

and fifty millions. Such figures are difficult to grasp but may be the better appreciated by contrasts; it may therefore be pointed out that the area of the Indian Empire is greater than the whole of Russia in Europe, with Germany and Yugoslavia thrown in, and helpful to remember that Burma is about the same size as France; Bombay Presidency is as big as Italy, whilst Madras, the Punjab, the Central Provinces and Rajputana are all larger than the British Isles. Again, Bihar and Orissa, and the United Provinces, are each as large as the united area of Greece and Hungary, whilst the Sovereign States of Hyderabad and Kashmir have greater acreage than Great Britain excluding Yorkshire.

In considering the question of population, if the same system of contrasts is applied, we find that the population of India is nearly equal that of Europe without Russia, and is considerably more than twice that of the United States of America. The United Provinces and Bengal Presidency have each as many inhabitants as the British Isles, Bihar and Orissa as France, the Punjab as Spain and Norway combined, Hyderabad and Burma as Egypt, the Central Provinces and Rajputana as Scotland and Ireland combined, and Assam as Belgium.

The next feature of the country which must be appreciated is that India is above all else an agricultural country. Calcutta and Bombay are the only really great cities, as in the whole of India there are only thirty odd towns with a population of over a hundred thousand—that is centres of population comparable with comparatively small English provincial towns, such as Blackburn, Bolton, Coventry, Halifax and Norwich.

During its long and eventful history the rulers of India have founded many capitals, but these cities have either passed away or sunk into insignificance as compared with the great centres of population which owe their existence to the genius of the British settlers.

Calcutta has a romantic history. It only dates from 1690 when Job Carnock and some other British merchants moved to the present site from Hooghly, which had been colonized less than half a century previously.

Fort William was built, and in 1700 a son of the great Moghul Emperor Aurangzebe, who was Governor of Bengal, sold the site to the East India Company.

In 1707 Bengal was formed into a separate Presidency with Calcutta—which had already a population of ten thousand—as its capital.

There was a struggle between the Indian rulers and the Company characterized by the historic incident of the Black Hole of Calcutta, but the conflict ended in the Battle of Plassey which established the British supremacy.

Since 1757 the City has enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity and its development has been so rapid that in 1774 Warren Hastings, Governor of Bengal, was made Governor-General of India and given authority over Madras and Bombay.

Bombay has a very different history. It was not the first English settlement on the West Coast of India for Captain William Hawkins established a factory at Surat in 1611. Bombay was then part of the Portuguese Empire in India. It was ceded to England as part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, and the impecunious Merry Monarch, trying to get a little money and do a good turn to his father-in-law, handed it over to the East India Company for an annual rent of £10 a year on the understanding that the Company helped the Portuguese against the Dutch, who were then making great headway in India.

It was not till the beginning of the eighteenth century that the headquarters of the Company was transferred from Surat to Bombay. This century was characterized by struggles between the Mahrattas and the Company, but since 1782 the City and its environs have remained in the possession of the British and, under the wise rule of succeeding governors, a small walled town has developed into

a splendid city with one of the finest harbours not only in the East, but in the world.

Bombay is now the gateway of India, and most travellers in the East get their first glimpse of the glory that is India from the broad streets, crowded bazaars and great buildings of the western capital of India. It is filled with a kaleidoscopic population consisting of representatives of the many nations which constitute the Empire of India.

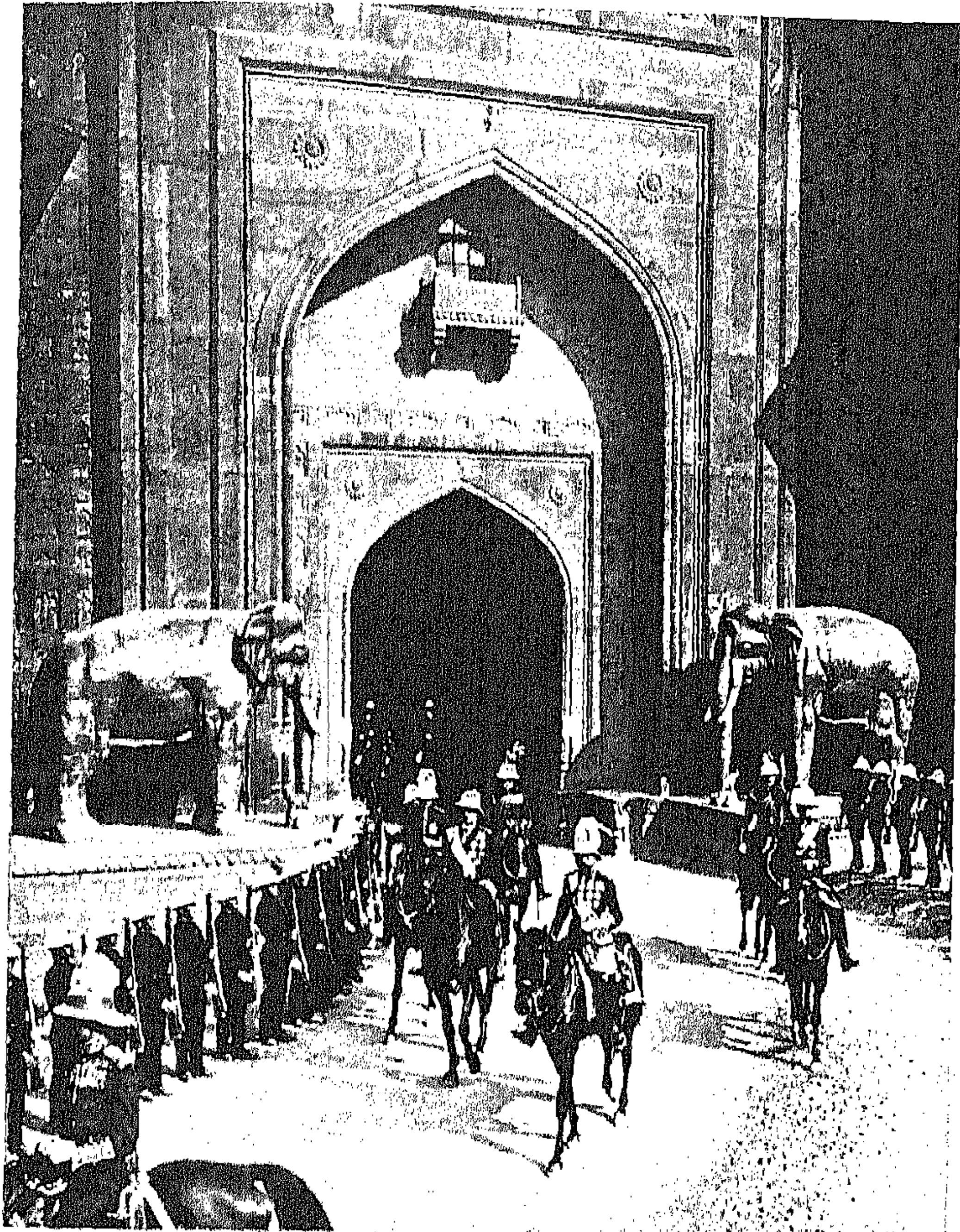
Both these great cities are much younger than Madras, which was the first important settlement of the Honourable East India Company on the Indian mainland. The site was given to Francis Day by the Raja of Chandragiri by a grant inscribed on a plate of gold.

Madras has less than half the population of Bombay but covers a much greater area, and its fine houses situated in extensive grounds are reminiscent of the spacious days of the early settlers in India.

Fort St. George still stands, a home of memories. In Writers Buildings, Clive twice snapped a pistol at his own head, and later, it was from this Fort that he marched to his great victories which laid the foundations of British supremacy. Near the south gate are quarters which, according to tradition, were once occupied by the Duke of Wellington, for be it remembered that the victor of Waterloo won his spurs in the service of John Company, and that his achievements with Indian troops were well-nigh as notable as his later conquests with armies which would be the despair of modern generals.

Interesting as these three cities are as memorials of British achievement, we must pass to the great Indian midlands for the sites of the capitals of Indian rulers.

Delhi, the Rome of Asia, or its vicinity, has seen no less than seven cities since the Pathans of Ghazni overthrew the Tamar Rajputs in the twelfth century and laid the foundations of Mohammedan empire in India. Tradition claims it as a settlement of the early Aryans, and says its neighbourhood was the scene of a great Hindu epic which

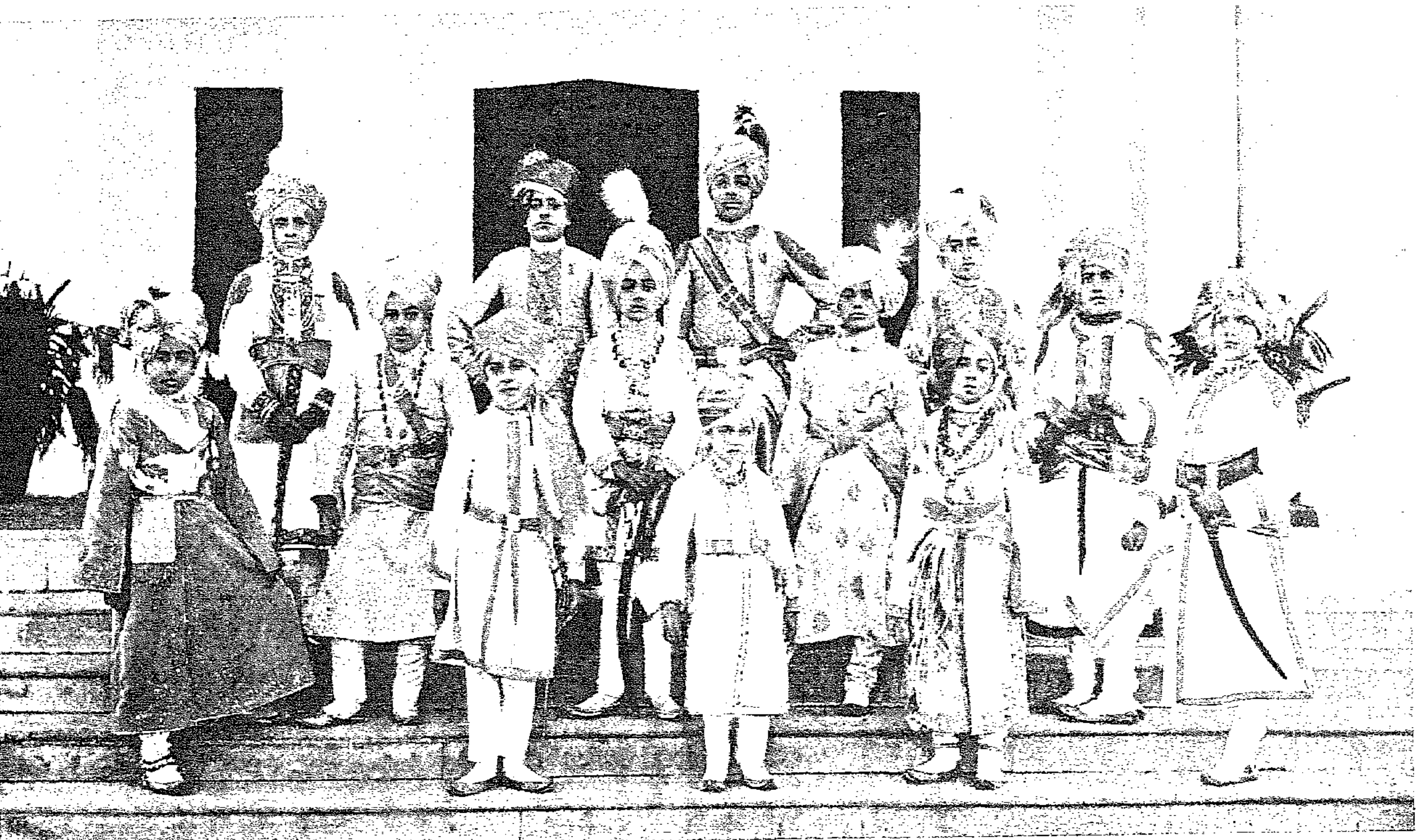


[Photo: E. Brooks

THE KING EMPEROR PASSING OUT OF DELHI FORT

[Face page 14

Face page 15]



THE INDIAN PAGES OF THE KING EMPEROR

[Photo: Bremner

records events that occurred fifteen hundred years before Christ.

The history of Delhi would fill many volumes, and not the least glorious pages of the history of the British *and Indian* armies were written on the historic Ridge in 1857.

To-day, the traveller will see little evidence of the presence of British bayonets in the town, as the soldiers live apart in what are still called "camps" in Western India, but characterized elsewhere by the more euphonious name of "cantonments."

But if we want to see the real India we must leave the towns and camps and go to the villages, of which there are no less than half a million scattered throughout the great sub-continent. Here we will find a vast variety of peoples, not of one race but of a hundred races.

Kipling has outlined the feelings of these peasant folk in the words:

"The ploughman settles the share
More deep in the grudging clod
For the Earth, the wheat is my care
And the rest is the will of God."

Side by side with the peasants and forming a great section of the Indian people are the craftsmen in stone, wood, metal and textiles. It has been well said that other countries, east and west of India, have produced work equal at least in stone, wood, and metal; but none has ever matched the skill of her weavers in cotton and wool, or excelled them in the weaving of silken fabrics. "Some of the products of the looms of Bengal are marvels of technical skill and perfect taste, while the plum-bloom quality of the old Cashmere shawls is an artistic achievement which places them in a class by themselves. Weaving, being essentially a process of repetition, was the first to which machinery was applied, and modern science has brought power-loom weaving to such a state of perfection that filaments of a substance finer even than those of Dacca,

which astonished our ancestors, are now produced in the mills of Lancashire. But for beauty of surface and variety of texture no machine-made fabrics have ever equalled the finest handwork of the weavers of India."

The Indian craftsman, like the European, has suffered from the introduction of machinery, but life is easier in India and the handworker has still great scope for his skill.

The mills and factories which have sprung up all over India have only industrialized one per cent of her population. Nevertheless, when the total population of a country amounts to the enormous figure of three hundred and fifty millions, even a small percentage of it represents a substantial number of people; and in point of fact the existence in India of approximately 20,000,000 persons, who, it has been calculated, might legitimately be described as industrial workers, has entitled her—as a result of the memorandum issued from the India Office to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations in 1921—to be listed by the International Labour Organization as one of the eight most important industrial States in the world, and to claim a seat on its governing body.

Another point to be emphasized is the comparative novelty of industrialism in India, and the rapidity of its growth. Prior to about 1880, the number of organized industrial concerns in the country was extremely small, and it is only during the last three decades that undertakings such as mining, railway and dockyard work, the manufacture of iron and steel, paper, matches, and so forth, have come to play an important part in the country's economic life.

So this is India.

A few—a very few—great towns, and many villages. A few people who can read and millions of illiterate people. As I shall show, India is a great country just as Europe is a great country, made up of many nations, but until the British occupation India was merely a geographical expression.

In the words of that great sportsman and most eminent of Indians, His Highness the Aga Khan, "Generations must pass before India is a nation."

Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, speaking recently at the Round Table Conference, said:

"It was the glory of great Britain that she had taught Indians for the first time in three thousand years (with two exceptions) to envisage India as a political unit."

The exceptions to which Mr. Sastri referred were obviously the days of Asoka, to which I have referred, and the reign of Akbar, which I have attempted to visualize, but neither the Buddhist Kings nor the Moghul Emperors controlled the whole of India.

It is a striking and vital fact that in its history, covering thousands of years—

"*political union attained* by the subjection of *All India* to one monarch of paramount authority *never was enjoyed by All India until the full establishment of the British Sovereignty*, which may be dated in one sense so recently as 1877, when Queen Victoria became Empress of India, in another sense from 1858, when Her Majesty assumed direct government of British India, and in a third sense from 1818, when the Marquis of Hastings shattered the Maratha power and openly proclaimed the fact that the East India Company had become the paramount authority throughout the whole country."

India is a great country with a historic past, great resources, and a great future, but it was merely a land of disunited and warring principalities and the happy hunting ground of soldiers of fortune, until a Company of London merchants welded it together under a strong central government and brought to it far greater prosperity, enlightenment and development than had been dreamed of in the golden ages of either Asoka or Akbar. To the genius of the British people is due "The Glory that is India."

CHAPTER II

PEOPLES OF MYSTERY

"Thrones, Powers, Dominions, Peoples, Kings,
Are changing 'neath our hand."

—KIPLING.

INDIA has been described as a great museum of races. Its inhabitants vary much more in appearance and characteristics than any of the inhabitants of Europe.

The Norwegian and the Greek are far more akin than the Rajput and the Madrassi, although both profess the same religion. Of the original inhabitants of India we know very little. For the most part they have been blended with a succession of invaders, but some primitive tribes still preserve the characters of the aborigines of India.

Ages ago there was a great invasion of white people from the north called Aryans, and the system of caste peculiar to India was probably originally designed to preserve the white colour of these early colonists.

After them came Scythians, Pathans and Moghuls, and, in the north-east, Mongoloid tribes bringing with them distinct racial characteristics. There are no less than seven main physical types to be found in various parts of the great sub-continent differing from each other in every possible way, in colour, in culture and in creed; indeed there is as little resemblance between the Pathan of the North-West frontier and the Hindustani *bannia* who sells him his flour, as there is between the Parisian and the native of Peking.

The Turko-Iranian type is found in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province. These frontiersmen are

a splendid race, with long Jewish noses, fair complexions and hazel, grey, or blue eyes.

Closely rivalling these sturdy fellows are what are known as the Indo-Aryans with their homes in the Punjab, Rajputana and Kashmir. These Indians, in all but colour—and even in colour they are hardly more dusky than the races round the Mediterranean—closely resemble well-bred Europeans. They are fine upstanding fellows with good features and dark eyes. They have well-shaped, aquiline noses and they cultivate plentiful moustaches and beards.

Next we have the Mongoloid type of the Himalayas, Nepal, Assam and Burma. These sturdy chaps are short in stature and their complexions have a yellowish tinge. Their faces are flat and their noses broad, and their eyelids are often oblique. Here we have races which, though somewhat darker, correspond to the external aspect and temperament of the Siamese and Japanese. In intellectual ability, and the artistic faculty, they are inferior to the people of what we may call India proper, but Europeans find them among the most congenial of Indian races. They are sociable, good-natured, straightforward people. In the western Himalayas, there has been intermixture with Aryan invaders, as in the Kangra Valley and Nepal, and the ruling dynasties claim Rajput origin, for the Indo-Aryans loved to settle in the cool hills, much as the Anglo-Indian does to this day. But on the mountainous frontiers of North-East Bengal and Assam, the Mongoloid peoples have remained undisturbed till our own time.

Lastly we have the Dravidians who represent not the original inhabitants of India but a people of a higher civilisation, who, long before the dawn of history, swept the nomadic primitive tribes into the hills and jungle fastnesses. The Dravidians are a dark-skinned race and short in stature as compared with the Turkish and Indo-Aryan types. They have mixed with various other strains, but in the main their original characteristics are maintained from the valley of the Ganges to Ceylon.

The old belief that the Dravidians were the original inhabitants of India was suggested by the fact that they occupy the most southern part of the peninsula, between races, who can with certainty be called invaders, and the deep sea. There is a considerable uniformity of physical features among the lower specimens of this type. They have in common an animistic religion, a distinctive language, peculiar stone monuments, and a primitive system of totemism. They do not resemble Europeans on the one hand, or the races of the Far East on the other.

In contrast to these descendants of the old colonists, are the races occupying the Punjab and Rajputana, which approach quite nearly to the social classes of Europe.

On the warrior Rajput the burden of caste sits lightly, and not merely his customs and idioms but words in his language are similar to those of Western races.

The probability seems to be that these cultured people invaded India with their herds and families in much the same way as the Jews entered and possessed themselves of Palestine. Against this belief is the fact that the territory through which these immigrants must have passed is dry, barren, and all but deserted. But abundant indications remain to show that the climate of the Indus Valley and the tracts to the north has changed within comparatively recent times. The relics of crowded populations and ancient civilisations abound in regions now sandy desert, and there is evidence in the tales told by Greek and Chinese travellers that the Punjab itself, now comparatively arid, was once well wooded. The theory is that the homogeneous and handsome population of the Punjab and Rajputana represents the almost pure descendants of Aryan settlers, who brought with them the Indo-European languages now prevailing over Northern India, just as our emigrants took the English language to America.

This conception accounts for the great northern nations, but another theory is necessary to explain the mixture of the Aryan and Dravidian types which occupies the sacred

midland country of Hinduism. The most feasible solution of the problem is that a second swarm of Aryans, seeking to escape the change of climate in Central Asia to which I have referred, entered India through the high and difficult passes of Gilgit, and Chitral and established themselves in the fertile plains between the Ganges and the Jumna. They followed a route which made it impossible for their women to accompany them, and after their arrival, took to themselves wives from the daughters of the dusky Dravidian settlers they found in occupation of their Canaan. Here, by contact with a different, and, as they considered, an inferior race, caste came into being. Here most of the Vedic hymns were composed. Here, by a blending of imported and indigenous religious ideals, the ritual and usages of Hinduism were gradually formulated to spread all over the peninsula. This ingenious notion accounts for the marked ethnical barrier which separates western from eastern Hindustan. Elsewhere the various types melt imperceptibly into one another. Here alone is a definite racial border line. Moreover, this view explains the fact that the Vedic hymns contain no references to the earlier Aryan migration, and the dislike of the inhabitants of the middle land for the early immigrants as men of low culture and barbarous manners.

Notwithstanding the Aryan and Mongolian invasions, the Dravidians in the east and west have maintained their characters unchanged. To-day, however, these early settlers are merely the hewers of wood and fetchers of water of the Peninsula. Labour is the birthright of the Dravidian whether hoeing tea in Assam, the Duars, or Ceylon, cutting rice in the swamps of Eastern Bengal or doing scavenger's work in the streets of Calcutta, Rangoon and Singapore. He is readily recognisable by his black skin, his squat figure, and the negro-like proportion of his nose. In the few who rise in the social scale, these typical characteristics tend to thin and disappear, but even among them traces of the original stock survive in varying degrees.

The parts of the continent occupied by the various types I have described, do not admit of being defined very sharply. They melt into each other, insensibly; and although at the close of a day's journey from one tract to another, one realises that the physical characteristics of the people around one have undergone appreciable changes, it is often hard to say at what particular stage in the traveller's progress the transformation has taken place.

The whole of the Indian races may be found represented in any of the big towns, but if he wishes to see the old aboriginal people of India the traveller must leave the beaten track and look for them in the hills and plateaus, which were at one time inaccessible parts of the Peninsula.

The Bhils are the best known of these primitive communities. They are found in the hilly districts of Central India, the Khandesh District of Bombay and the Vindhya Hills. They are a sturdy race, short in stature but possessing great bravery, agility and strength. They love fighting and are expert thieves, and many tales are told of their adroitness as robbers. They operate naked and oiled all over, so it is not easy to lay hold of a Bhil burglar. A Bhil has been known to steal a blanket from under a sleeping man, although the sleeper has been warned that the attempt would be made.

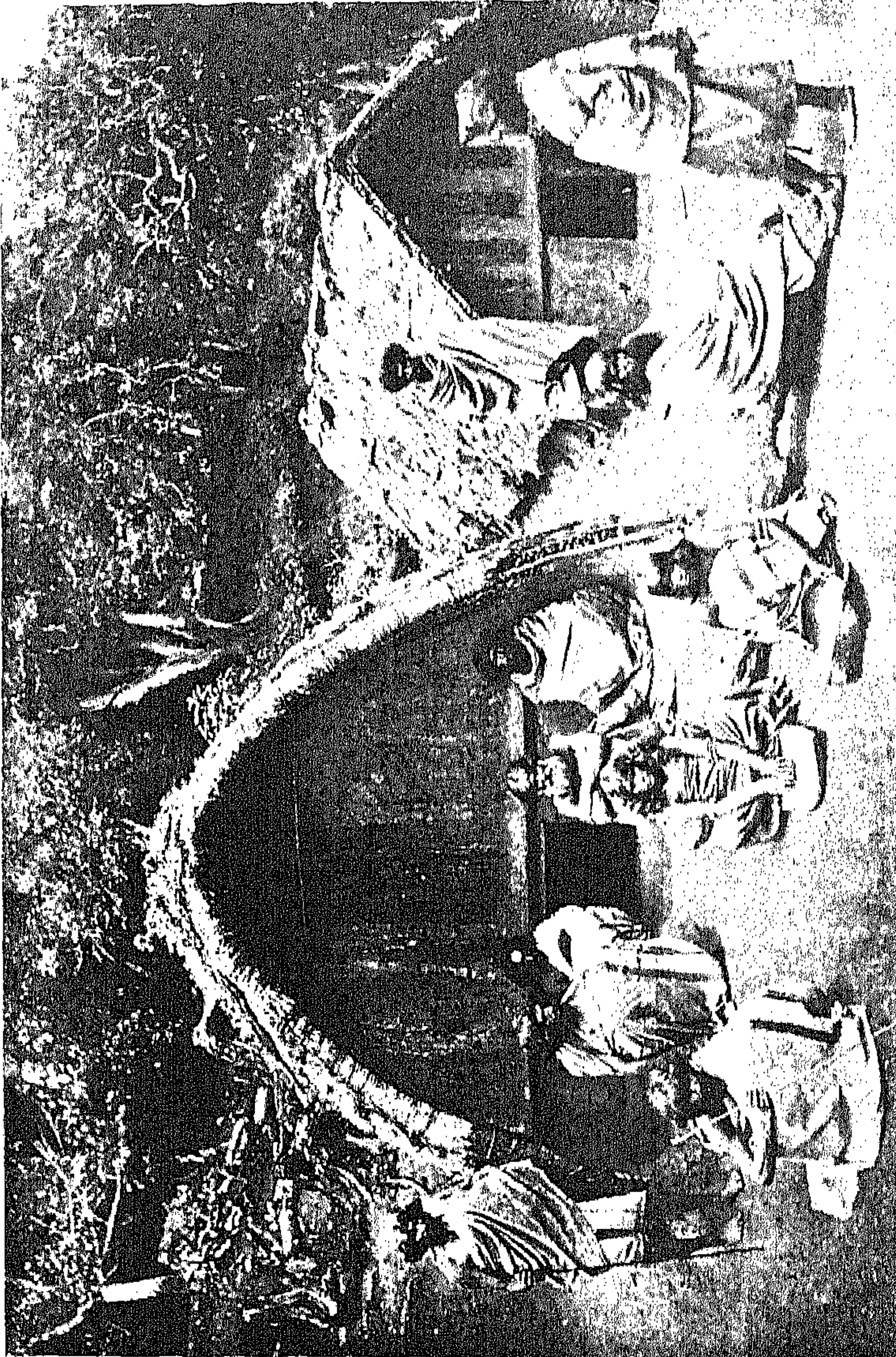
They are very clever at hiding themselves in the jungles, and when pursued by the police have often escaped capture by adopting what naturalists call "protective mimicry." They are able to throw their black sinewy limbs into such attitudes that they are mistaken for the scorched and burned stumps of trees, common in the jungle on account of forest fires. Sir James Outram won many of them over to comparative civilisation, and raised two regiments of Bhils for the Indian army. The tribes build their huts of boughs and sticks and thatch, and wattle them with long grass.

The Bhils are very superstitious and have very primitive religious beliefs. "The Mori clan worship the peacock as



A Flower of Fair Kashmir

[*Face page* 22



A GROUP OF TODAS AND THEIR HOME IN THE NILGHIRIS

Face page 23]

their totem and make offerings of grain to it; yet members of the clan believe that were they ever to set foot on the tracks of a peacock they would afterwards suffer from some disease, and if a woman sees a peacock she must veil her face and look away."

The Bhils number about a million, and of recent years, largely through their military service, civilisation is getting some hold on them.

Another well known race are the Khonds or Kos, who occupy parts of the Central Provinces. They practised both human sacrifice and infanticide prior to coming under the British influence less than a century ago. They are firmly convinced that certain people can change themselves into tigers, a superstition which General Sleeman refers to in his interesting Recollections. He tells us that when a tiger kills a man, the man's spirit rides on his head, and it is supposed that the only sure mode of destroying a tiger who has killed many people is to begin by making offerings to the spirits of his victims, and thereby depriving him of their valuable services. The belief that men are turned into tigers by eating a root is general throughout India.

The Khonds used to capture Brahman boys to sacrifice to their gods. In the bad old days, a thriving Khond village used to keep a stock of prisoners designed to be sacrificed to meet any sudden anger of their gods. These victims were kidnapped from villages in the plains, and on arrival at the Khond Settlement were welcomed at every threshold, daintily fed and kindly treated till the day of sacrifice arrived. They were then tied on great wooden elephants and hacked to pieces whilst the sacrificial elephant was spun round on a central pinion.

In the victim's dying ears the bloodthirsty Khonds shouted, "We bought you at a price; no sin rests with us."

General Campbell tells an interesting story of an incident which came to his personal knowledge. Hearing that a human sacrifice was to be offered up he sent off a party of troops under an English officer to stop it. On arrival

the soldiers found that the victim was a handsome girl of about fifteen. They insisted on her release and carried her off, but no sooner had the soldiers gone out of sight than the Khonds broke out into loud murmurings. They would not be disappointed; and so, at the suggestion of one of the party, they sacrificed the aged priest himself, because, being seventy years old, he could be of no further use! And so he was forthwith tied on to the wooden elephant and cut to pieces.

Among these people the custom of "marriage by capture" prevails. The young man snatches up his bride, while her friends pretend to pursue them. However, his friends come to the rescue and prevent her recapture. As soon as his own village is reached he is safe, and the young couple settle down to married life.

In spite of the cruel human sacrifices above referred to, which, of course, have a religious aspect, the Khonds have good points in their favour. Their nine cardinal sins are: to refuse hospitality; to break an oath or promise; to speak falsely; to break a pledge of friendship; to break an old law or custom; to commit incest; to get into debt; to skulk in time of war; or to divulge a secret. On the other hand, their three chief virtues are: to kill a foe in a fair fight; to die in battle; and to serve the gods as a priest.

Frazer relates that among the Khonds a birth is celebrated on the seventh day after the event by a feast given to the priest and to the whole village. "To determine the child's name, the priest drops grains of rice into a cup of water, naming with each grain a deceased ancestor. From the movements of the seed in the water, and from observations made on the person of the infant, he pronounces which of his progenitors has reappeared in him, and the child generally, at least among the northern tribes, receives the name of that ancestor."

The Nilghiri Hills which occupy a large part of the country south of Mysore, is very rich in aboriginal tribes.

A book might be written about these primitive peoples, and, indeed, two great tomes have been published about them.

The Kurumbas were perhaps the least enlightened of these curious tribes, and their food formerly consisted of wild roots and berries with an occasional meat dish consisting of a porcupine or a pole cat!

They formerly lived in rude shelters formed from branches of trees or in little caves or clefts in the rocks.

They are quite free from any moral restrictions in regard to sexual relations, and the children of the tribe are held in common by the various families. Nowadays they work for regular wages as coolies, but adhere to most of their primitive customs.

The most interesting, perhaps the best known of all the aboriginal tribes of India, are the Todas, who are to be found all over the Blue Mountains, as the Nilghiris are sometimes called.

They are a tall, dark-skinned, sturdy race with handsome features which so closely resemble those of the Jews that fanciful writers believe them to be the lost tribes of Israel.

Indeed the resemblance between the appearance of a fine specimen of Toda manhood and the pictures of Our Lord, with which one is familiar, is quite startling.

Like the Israelites of old, the Todas are a pastoral race, living amongst their flocks and herds and keeping themselves aloof from all the influence of the other Indian residents and the other tribes of their native mountains.

It is impossible not to be struck by the taste and simplicity of their costume. Draped in a sort of toga, with one arm and thigh uncovered, they have quite the "grand air"; but unlike even the Dravidians of the plains, the bath finds no place in their domestic economy. Like the Pathans of the Frontier, the Todas consider themselves in no way inferior to Europeans with whom they come in contact, and district officers who have to deal with them say that their hearty good-humour and free, jovial manners are no less pleasing than their politeness, affability and courtesy.

The Todas practise polyandry, and, as usually is the case where this custom exists, their women are not only treated with great respect but are really "top dogs" in this primitive community.

A Toda village consists of a few families who hold in common a small herd of buffaloes. They subsist largely on the milk of the buffaloes, which are treated with great kindness, even with a degree of adoration, by the people. They never eat the flesh of the cow buffalo, and as a rule abstain from the flesh of the male, but to the latter rule there is a single exception. Once a year all the adult males of the village join in the ceremony of killing and eating a very young male calf. The animal is taken into a grove of trees and killed with a club made from the Millingtonia, the sacred tree of the Todas. A sacred fire having been made by the rubbing of sticks, the veal is roasted on the embers of certain woods, and is eaten by the men alone, women being excluded from the feast.

The Toda families live in small bamboo huts and the cattle are kept in a stone enclosure near-by, but "the dairy is a sanctuary, and the milkman who attends to it has been described as a god. On being asked whether the Todas salute the sun, one of these divine milkmen replied, 'Those poor fellows do so, but I,' tapping his chest, 'I, a god! why should I salute the sun?' Everyone, even his own father, prostrates himself before the milkman, and no one would dare to refuse him anything. No human being, except another milkman, may touch him; and he gives oracles to all who consult him, speaking with the voice of a god. The holy milkman, who acts as priest of the sacred dairy, is subject to a variety of irksome and burdensome restrictions during the whole time of his incumbency, which may last many years. Thus he must live at the sacred dairy and may never visit his home or any ordinary village. He must be celibate; if he is married he must leave his wife. On no account may any ordinary person touch the holy milkman or the holy dairy; such a touch

would so defile his holiness that he would forfeit his office. It is only on two days a week, namely Mondays and Thursdays, that a mere layman may even approach the milkman; on other days, if he has any business with him, he must stand at a distance (some say a quarter of a mile) and shout his message across the intervening space. Further the holy milkman never cuts his hair or pares his nails so long as he holds office; he never crosses a river by a bridge, but wades through a ford—and only certain fords at that! If a death occurs in his clan, he may not attend any of the funeral ceremonies, unless he first resigns his office and descends from the exalted rank of milkman to that of a mere common mortal. Indeed it appears that in old days he had to resign the seals, or rather the pails, of office whenever any member of his clan departed this life. However, these heavy restraints are laid in their entirety only on milkmen of the very highest class."

The Toda religion is animist, and all attempts by missionaries to convert this interesting tribe have failed, which is not surprising, as they have resisted absorption by the various proselytizing creeds which have swept down on India through countless centuries.

In the mountainous and jungle tracts west and south of Calcutta, are found a number of tribes known as Kolarians, who, like the Todas, possess a considerable share of good looks. Some of the young girls are quite pretty, with finely chiselled straight noses and perfectly formed mouths and chins. They carry themselves well, and unlike most of the Dravidians have copper-coloured, instead of black, skins. There are about ten chief tribes, and as many Kolarian dialects, including the Munda-Kols of Chota Nagpur, the Larka-Kols, or Ho, of the Singbhum district, the Bhumij of Bengal, the Santals, the Karia, and the Juangs or Patuns. These latter are the lowest type, mere hunters and fruit-gatherers with very little civilisation. "Kol" is the basis of the word "coolie," these people being very ready to hire themselves on the contract system.

Formerly the Juang women wore no clothes. Like some African tribes they used to wear a bunch of leaves tied in front and behind with, for full dress, a few strings of beads.

About sixty years ago the Government, shocked at this survival of primitive custom in civilised British India, ordered that the Juangs must wear clothes. The British officer called the tribe together, made a speech on the subject of clothes, and then handed out strips of cotton for the women to put on! Obediently they passed before him in single file, "salaamed" as a sign of their submission, and were afterwards marked on the forehead with vermilion. But this enforced submission to the great Mrs. Grundy was not a success, for before long many of the Juang women had gone back to their leaves. These people, until quite lately, had no knowledge of metals, and may be regarded as a relic from the Stone Age. An officer who knew them well said their huts were the smallest ever deliberately constructed as dwellings. The head of the family and all the females huddle together in one hut about 6 feet by 8 feet in area. The boys and young men live in a separate building.

The north-west frontier of India is well known even to globe trotters, but parts of the north-east frontier is still a land of mystery, even to Indian administrators.

Kashmir is on this frontier, but is as familiar as British India, indeed it is the playground of the fortunate Englishmen who can escape to its cool mountain slopes from the sun-scorched plains of northern India. To Indian residents, Kashmir in the north like the Nilghiris in the south, are really tropical Switzerlands.

Most of the Indian states are embedded in various parts of the country, and the subjects of their princes present the same varied types found in the neighbouring provinces of British India.

Kashmir is quite different. It is peopled by a handsome Indo-Aryan race bearing little resemblance to the various types which occupy the plains further south.

The men are square built, well-proportioned fellows with a frank expression and the women are fresh-looking and often decidedly beautiful. The better classes are scarcely darker than many of the Latin races, and in character they are shrewd, witty and cheerful.

Originally said to be snake-worshippers, the Kashmiris were converted first to Buddhism, then to Hinduism, and finally to Islam by the Moghul emperors, but are ruled over by a Dogra chief, a set-off in northern India to the state of things which exists in Hyberabad in the south, where a Mohammedan prince rules over a kingdom of Hindus.

More curious still is the fact that one of the provinces of Kashmir, Ladakh, is a Buddhist stronghold, whilst the neighbouring district of Baltistan is peopled by Mohammedans.

Further east is the great semi-independent state of Nepal which gives to the Indian Army the gallant Gurkhas, who are unsurpassed, even by the Pathans of the North-West Frontier, as fighters in the hills. Here has been established for nearly a century a curious form of government. The sovereign is merely a figurehead, and the real ruler is the Prime Minister, with the Commander-in-Chief of the Army as his chief lieutenant.

Further east is Bhutan, an important frontier state, where the Buddhist faith survives to such an extent that the government of the country is nominally divided between two authorities, a Dharma Raja who is regarded as the spiritual head, and a Deb Raja who is the temporal leader.

The Dharma Raja is regarded as a very high incarnation of Buddha, far higher than the ordinary incarnations in Tibet, of which there are several hundreds. On the death of a Dharma Raja a year or two is allowed to elapse, and his reincarnation then takes place, always in the Choje, or royal family of Bhutan.

Still further east we come to the Assam frontier, with its border tribes, the Miris, the Abors and the Mishmis, and

the important state of Manipur and petty chieftainships of the Kasi and Jaintra Hills.

There was a military expedition to the Abor country in 1911–1912 and friendly missions at the same time to the Miris and Mishmis, but close contact with forest clad and leech-infested hills has not encouraged more intimate relations with the savage tribes which manage to survive and, indeed, to flourish in their almost inaccessible depths.

In these wild regions there is little security of life and property and there is more or less continual internal warfare, so that the wild frontiersmen live in large villages erected on sites selected for their defensive capabilities.

Just north of Manipur is a tract of country occupied by the famous Nagas or Nagasares, who are the most primitive of all the wild races on the Burman borders.

They are a Mongolian people devoted to head hunting, which is still vigorously prosecuted by the independent tribes.

But we have not to go so far as the mountains which bar the way from India to China to find aboriginal tribes which are wellnigh as primitive in their outlook if less bloodthirsty in their habits.

Little more than fifty miles from the great modern city of Bombay and close to the pretty little hill station of Matheran, which, during the summer season, is the popular week-end resort of the British exiles in Bombay, live a very primitive tribe known as the Thakurs.

Like the Bhils, the Gonds and the Todas, the Thakurs are an aboriginal tribe and perhaps as ancient in their obscure origin as the very hills midst which they live. Miserably poor, the condition of these people has been somewhat bettered in recent times with the growth of the hill station, and large numbers were employed during the construction of the Steam Tramway. At present many eke out a living by selling fowls, eggs, wild-honey, fodder and jungle berries to the visitors, while others have become rickshaw-men and some undertake all sorts of odd jobs.



GOOD-LOOKING GIRLS OF THE KOLARIAN TRIBES

[*Face page* 30



DAINTY DAUGHTERS OF MADRAS

Face page 31]

It is on Sunday that the Thakurs are seen in large numbers. On that day, Matheran holds its weekly bazaar. Before dawn, troop after troop of these hill folk ascend the mountain paths, and men, women, children and even babies around their mothers' waists make this weekly trip. Wonderfully sure-footed, they ascend treacherous reaches of the mountain-side frequently without even a stick to aid them, and their sure-footedness is further illustrated by the manner in which little children run along the precipitous and narrow railway track, keeping abreast with the train and shouting for a copper coin. At the bazaar, the main interest of the women lies in multi-coloured bead necklaces, hair ornaments and cheap metal bracelets, armlets and earrings. Their undying delight in these gee-gaws is extraordinary, and they will adorn themselves with as many as twenty or more necklaces all worn at the same time in splendid confusion. Around the bazaar sit the Thakurs in groups under the shade of trees, chatting and laughing merrily while they wait for the others of their own particular company before starting for the valley. The majority of Thakurs are averse to being photographed, and the dwellers of some of the villages will refuse to pose even for handsome "baksheesh." The women wear a kind of short divided skirt coming half-way down their thighs and a bodice. Many carry in addition a long white cloth which they wrap round their bodies in a variety of modes while their necks and arms are covered with numerous ornaments. The men are very often naked except for a loin cloth and a white turban, and almost all carry a folded blanket thrown over one shoulder which is used as a protection against the cold and rain. Though dark-skinned, these aborigines are far from being stunted or ugly, and it is not uncommon to come across a good-looking Thakur girl or a finely-featured Thakur brave.

With the Thakurs, the woman is not an inferior in any respect, and the younger men and women are so delightfully free and unreserved in their general relations that

there is no mistaking that the Thakur men look on their women as equal partners. The majority of them are monogamous, though some have two wives, and they do not inter-marry with the other peoples living round Matheran.

The villages in which the Thakurs live consist of from twelve to fifty huts made of mud-bricks plastered with cow-dung and covered with thatched roofs. The entrance to each hut is very low, and even a short person would have to bend considerably in order to enter. Apart from a few pots and pans, the huts contain no furniture whatsoever, the inmates sleep on the ground and as many as ten persons reside in a single hut.

Unlike the Bhils, the Thakurs possess no primitive weapons of offence, and they have no knowledge of the art of using bows and arrows.

Some of the happiest days in my life were spent amongst the people of the Simla Hills, who are called Kanets. According to their own account they are Rajputs who have lost caste by adopting widow marriage, but there seems to be little doubt that their ancestors occupied the Himalayas.

They differ from orthodox Hindus in many ways. They practise polyandry, do not wear the sacred thread, and are very careless about their funeral ceremonies.

Their women are an independent lot, and if they take a fancy for a new mate they go to him, but he must reimburse the first husband for her jewellery and his marriage expenses!

They are a simple credulous people, worshipping a great variety of gods. Indeed, their deities are so numerous that there is hardly a nook or corner without one. A twig of a tree, a thorny branch, a growing shrub, or even a heap of stones, may be found with a piece of red or white rag tied to it, indicating that it is consecrated to some celestial being.

Nearly every hamlet has a divinity of its own which dwells on the nearest mountain top. Temples are everywhere containing images of gods or goddesses.

In the case of the gods, the idols consist of masks made

of precious metals, but the whole figure of the goddesses is represented.

The hill people, like my country folk in Ireland, believe firmly in the "Evil Eye." Only certain charms avert the dire consequences of the Eye and the priests make a good profit out of their sales. To keep the evil eye off crops a long post is erected in the field and a large bone or the skin of an animal is fixed to it. This serves a double purpose, as it also acts as a scarecrow!

The standard of morality amongst the hill people is low. Divorce, as we have seen, is easily obtained. Adultery with a man of the same tribe is not seriously resented and sexual licence is common amongst the poorer families.

Women are not veiled, and when young many of them have beautiful faces and graceful figures. They carry out most of the work in the fields, and it is said that they are often even yoked to the plough instead of oxen, but in all my wanderings in those delectable hills I have never actually seen this practice.

Such in a kaleidoscopic glance are the races which occupy the vast sub-continent of India.

Sufficient has been said to show that no generalities will cover an immense area which presents such a mass of human contradictions. At one end of the social scale stand the highly cultured and refined princes, landholders, merchants, and professional classes, and at the other the head-hunting savages of Assam and the leaf-clad aborigines of the southern Hills, who subsist on vermin and jungle products.

Surely, India is a Land of Mystery.

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTIC MIGHT OF HINDUISM

"We be the Gods of the East—
Older than all—
Masters of Mourning and Feast
How shall we fall?"

—KIPLING.

THE definition of Hinduism is a problem which has baffled Western writers for centuries. It is not fair to define it as Lyall has done, "as a tangled jungle of disorderly superstitions, ghosts, and demons, demi-gods and deified saints, local gods, universal gods, with their countless shrines and temples, and the din of their discordant rites; deities who abhor a fly's death, those who delight in human sacrifices, and those who would not either sacrifice or make offering—a religious chaos throughout a vast region never subdued or levelled, like all Western Asia, by Mohammedan or Christian monotheism." Nor is it adequate to accept Sir Herbert Risley, who says: "It conceives of man as passing through life surrounded by a ghostly company of powers, elements, tendencies, mostly impersonal in their character, shapeless phantasms of which no image can be made and no definite idea can be formed. Some of these have departments or spheres of influence of their own: one presides over cholera, another over smallpox, another over cattle disease; some dwell in rocks, others haunt trees; others, again, are associated with rivers, whirlpools, waterfalls, or strange pools hidden in the depths of the hills. All of them require to be propitiated diligently by reason of the ills which proceed from them."

The fact is that Hinduism is a social system rather than a religion. It has gradually absorbed an immense variety of religious beliefs, and enclosed within its fold are the highly-gifted and learned Brahmans who have attained a degree of culture unexcelled in Western lands, and the unlettered hill man who preserves all sorts of animist cults.

Hindus are the most tolerant of people. They have never dreamed of a Council or Convocation, a common Prayer-book, or a set of Articles of Belief. "Each sect goes its own way, preaching its peculiar tenets, converting to its own standard the Animists by whom it is surrounded, and never combining for action except under the influence of some outburst of fanaticism, when the sacred cow, or a shrine in which only a handful of worshippers made sacrifice, is believed to be in danger."

It is this catholicism and indifference to dogma which makes for the strength and weakness of the system. Professor Max Müller justly observes that "the Indian Aryan lives this life with a full consciousness of his being a temporary sojourner, who has no permanent interest whatever in the things of this world." Being given to spiritual pursuits rather than to earthly comforts, he is by nature better fitted to solve the problem of existence which puzzles many a thinker and metaphysician of our age."

The first form in which Hinduism was introduced into India by the Aryans was what is known as Vedism—the worship of Nature—in which the chief gods were: Indra, the god of the sky, Agni, the fire-god, and Surya, the sun-god. Indra is the chief of this ancient trinity, and, at the beginning of time he secured an elephant on which he always rides, a beautiful dancing girl called Tambha, Uchaisrava, a snow-white horse, and the Parijata tree which grants every wish to its owner. Indra is represented armed with a thunderbolt in his right hand and a bow in his left, and is no longer worshipped on account of an escapade with the wife of the sage Gautama. Gautama cursed Indra so that he broke out into a thousand sores, and he turned his naughty

wife into stone. Eventually both Indra and his lady friend were pardoned, but as a punishment for Indra's unworthy behaviour he no longer receives worship.

The moon was mixed up in this affair, and the punishment rewarded was that it was smeared with black marks. The moon tried to get pardoned at the same time as Indra and Gautama's wife, but the pardon was not granted, with the result that it has still got black marks which are represented to Western eyes by the man in the moon.

In addition to the Vedic Trinity, rain, fire and the sun, there were a number of deities including the Ashvins, the twin sons of the Sun, who were the physicians of the gods. The twin brothers wrote important works on medicine and surgery, and many hymns in the Rig Veda are addressed to these twin gods, from which, as I shall point out later, it is clear that medicine and surgery were fully appreciated and held in high esteem by the ancient Hindus.

There was also Yama, the god of death, who judged the dead, allotting them their rewards and punishments. In the *Mahabharata*, Yama is described as a giant in blood-red garments with a noose in his hand and a glittering crown on his head. There was also a Vedic Bacchus called Soma, and a god of wealth known as Kubera. These deities are not worshipped in modern India, except in special ceremonies, but are often referred to in Hindu poetry.

The Vedic worship was followed by Brahmanism, which teaches that before the creation of the world there was a universal spirit, or essence, which permeated everything. This spirit resembles, to some extent, "the Word" in the Gospel according to St. John. The Word, or spirit, gave birth to the Hindu Trinity, which consists of Brahma, the Creator, Shiva, the Destroyer, and Vishnu, the Preserver. These three gods are undoubtedly Three in One, but they have very little in common with the Christian Trinity, as each of them has special individualities, and, indeed, separate wives and families. It is remarkable that Brahma, the creative spirit, is hardly worshipped at all,

and has only one temple in all India, but curiously enough, his wife, Sarasvati, is widely revered. She is the Hindu Minerva, the goddess of learning and of speech. She invented Sanskrit and is the St. Luke of the East, as she is the patroness of the arts and sciences. She is generally depicted riding on a peacock, with four arms playing on a lute or zither.

The gods Shiva and Vishnu share the main worship of our Indian fellow-subjects. Oddly enough, Shiva, who represents the destructive force, has far more worshippers than Vishnu, the force that preserves. Shiva is usually represented with a coil of hair from which flows a stream of water representing the Ganges river which originally flowed in Heaven.

The story of how the Ganges came down to earth is a curious one. Once upon a time there was a king in Oudh who had no less than sixty thousand sons, and he became so powerful that he desired to declare himself emperor of the universe. In order to do this it was necessary to send out an army consisting of his sixty thousand sons and a sacrificial horse, which forms a feature of Hindu legends. It was necessary for this horse to roam about India for a year, and if no one dared to capture it, its owner could sacrifice it to the gods and claim the sovereignty of the world. I refer to this sacrifice by Brahma later on. On this occasion Vishnu interfered, and, to make a long story short, burnt up the whole of the ambitious king's family army. When the king wished to perform the funeral rites of his sons, he could not find enough water for the purpose, so he formed the idea of asking the gods to send him down a river. This request was not granted until several generations had prayed for the boon, but eventually the Ganges descended on earth and would have bored its way through the earth's surface if Shiva had not caught it in his hair!

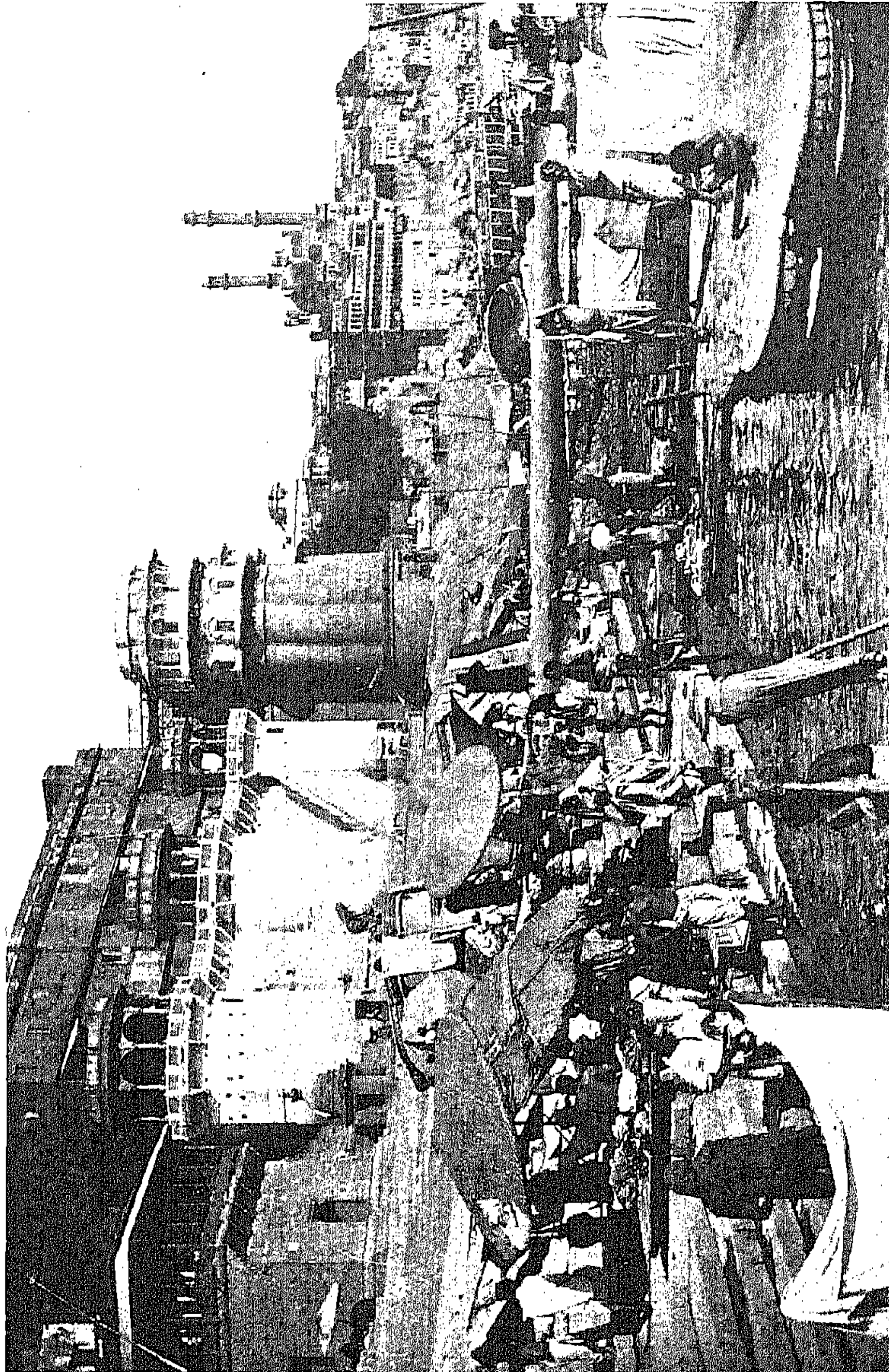
Shiva is shown in the frontispiece with a very charming lady on his left. This is his Queen, Parvati. In a former existence she was called Suttee, and on account of a quarrel between her father and her husband she was

so slighted by her parent that she burnt herself alive. From this incident is derived the word Suttee, applied, as we shall see, to the voluntary burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre.

In images of Shiva a snake is usually twined about his neck, and round his waist is a tiger's skin, and he is often shown holding an antelope in one hand. The snake, the tiger and the antelope recall a curious old story of an encounter between the god and a number of anchorites, who had attained such great "merit" that they endangered the thrones of the gods. Shiva, and his brother divinity Vishnu, set out to get the better of their opponents, and in order to do so Shiva turned himself into a handsome youth and Vishnu into a very beautiful young woman. Shiva made love to the wives of their rivals, and the anchorites all fell in love with Vishnu. These actions of human frailty robbed the anchorites of most of their merit, and, annoyed at the trick that had been played on them, they, as Mr, Kincaid says, "pooled what remained of their merits" and produced a man-eating tiger, which they set upon Shiva, who was at that moment dancing to amuse their wives. The god, without missing a step, seized the tiger and skinned it alive, and ever since has worn its skin as a trophy. The anchorites next created a cobra, which in turn attacked the god, but he simply picked it up and twined it round his neck, and ever since the cowed reptile has been a sort of divine muffler.

Lastly, the anchorites created a small buck, for what reason it is not quite clear, but it did not succeed in putting the god off his dance, as he seized it by its hind legs and has held it in his arms ever since.

Shiva had two sons, and one of them, Ganpati, or Ganesh, is the most popular of all Indian gods, as he is the god of good luck. His picture appears at the beginning of all the books of the old Indian merchants, his figure is often placed over the door of Indian houses, and even the schoolboys try to represent his trunk on their school books. He



THE HOLY CITY OF BENARES: THE BATHING GHATS

[*Photo: F. Deaville Walker*

[*Face page* 38



The Holy City of Benares: The Burning Ghats

Face page 39]

is always shown with an elephant's head, which he acquired in a very odd way. One explanation is that he was the most beautiful baby ever seen when he was born, and his mother was very proud of him and showed him off to the planet Saturn, which, according to the ancients, possessed the evil quality of destroying everything he "looked at." Saturn looked at the head of the baby Ganesh and it vanished instantly, burnt up by the terrible gaze of the destructive planet. In despair his mother consulted Brahma, the Creator, who said that he, unfortunately, could not restore the head, but he told her the best thing she could do would be to take the head of some man or beast, and, twisting it off, stick it on to the boy's shoulders. The unhappy mother found an elephant, removed its head and placed it on her own son's shoulders. It took root, and ever since Ganesh has gone about with an elephant's head.

Ganesh is shown with only one tusk; he lost his other one in a curious way. Vishnu, in one of his incarnations, came to see Shiva, who happened to be sleeping at the time. Vishnu desired to awake his brother deity, but Ganesh objected to his father being roused, so Vishnu and he had "a bit of a scrap" in which Ganesh caught up the god in his trunk and flung him some distance away. The visitor was very angry at being manhandled in this way by a minor deity, and flung an axe, which he carried, at the truculent elephant-headed god. Now it happened that this axe was one which Shiva had given to Vishnu, and as Ganesh could not avoid a blow from his father's axe, he awaited the missile with eyes downcast and hands reverently folded. The axe missed his head, but cut off one of his tusks near the root, and his filial devotion is shown by its absence to this day.

All the images of Ganesh display a rat, which funnily enough, is the favourite mount of the elephant god. The birthday of Ganesh is in September, and is a very popular festival with the children. Their parents give them little

images of the god which they carry about and play with like dolls.

Ganesh, or Ganpati, as he is also called, has amongst his other accomplishments achieved distinction as an author, as he is believed to have written the Great Hindu epic known as the *Mahabharata*. On this account he is regarded as the patron god of all great enterprises, and not only the merchants but authors of India invoke his help.

In the foreground of the frontispiece will be seen the sacred bull called Nandi, which is, oddly enough, the god's Chamberlain and chief Musician, but in addition to holding these offices at the court of Shiva, he is a divinity himself, as he is the god of animals and it is to him, and not to any member of the Hindu Trinity, that the animal kingdom is said to address its prayers.

Vishnu worship is the favourite cult of rich Indians. His image is finely chased and decorated, solemnly washed at daybreak, dressed, fed, put to bed for a siesta, and finally made comfortable for the night.

In the cult of Shiva there are few images of the god. The Destroyer is most generally worshipped in the form of the lingam or phallic emblem. The lingam is analogous to the *priapus* of the Romans and the *phallus* of the Egyptians.

Hindu legends relate a scandalous tale of a visit of the other members of the Hindu Trinity and a distinguished company to Shiva, who was discovered in bed with his wife. Far from being disconcerted at being found in such an embarrassing position, Shiva continued to embrace his wife, to the horror of his visitors, who "loaded the shameless Shiva with insults and curses."

It was only when his brother gods had retired horrified at his behaviour, that Shiva woke up to the enormity of his actions, and both he and his wife died of grief in the same position in which the gods and their attendants had surprised them. Before dying, however, he issued orders to his disciples which declared that "if you desire to become

virtuous, learn what are the benefits to be derived from honour rendered to my *lingam*. Those who make images of it with earth or cow-dung, or do *puja* to it under this form, shall be rewarded; those who make it in stone shall receive seven times more reward, and shall never behold the Prince of Darkness; those who make it in silver shall receive seven times more reward than the last named; and those who make it in gold shall be seven times more meritorious still. Let my priests go and teach these truths to men, and compel them to embrace the worship of my *lingam*! The *lingam* is Shiva himself; it is white; it has three eyes and five faces; it is arrayed in a tiger's skin. It existed before the world, and it is the origin and the beginning of all beings. It disperses our terrors and our fears, and grants us the object of all our desires."

The worship of the *lingam* is somewhat perfunctory. It consists of a water oblation, or the placing of a few flowers on the emblem with or without a perambulation round the shrine, which must be done with the right shoulder towards the sacred object in the course of the sun, or as we pass the decanters round the dinner-table.

So the *lingam* remains the favourite symbol of Hindu worship, especially amongst Indian married women to-day.

The wife of Shiva has quite as many, if not more followers than her lord. She has many names in addition to that of Parvati, and although this divinity is the goddess of beauty, she is hardly worshipped at all in this capacity.

It is as Devi, THE goddess, or Kali, or Durga, the Terrible, that she claims millions of worshippers in all parts of India. Kali has been well called "the goddess of blood" and the apotheosis of brute force. Her worship has been associated with the horrible crimes of the Thugs, whose victims were regarded as sacrifices to Kali, on whose protection these ghouls relied with unquestioning faith.

There is a famous temple to the goddess at Kalighat, which is visited by crowds of pilgrims every October. This

place gave its name to the great city of Calcutta and derives sanctity from the legend that when the corpse of Siva's wife was cut in pieces by order of the gods, and chopped up by the disc of Vishnu, one of her fingers fell on this spot. The temple is supposed to have been built about three centuries ago. A member of the Sâbarna Chaudhury family, who at one time owned considerable estates in this part of the country, cleared the jungle, built the temple, and allotted 194 acres of land for its maintenance. A man of the name of Chandibar was the first priest appointed to to manage the affairs of the temple. His descendants have now taken the title of Haldar, and are at present the proprietors of the building.

The third person in the Hindu Trinity is Vishnu, the Preserver. He is a much more human person than Shiva and his worship is of a much more gentle character. He is said to have come down to the earth nine times, and is expected to have a tenth incarnation. He has already appeared as a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a man-lion and a dwarf, and he had also appeared as two of the most popular Hindu heroes, Rama and Krishna. The last appearance of Vishnu on earth was as Buddha. Now, the teaching of Buddha was, as we shall see, an attempt to reform the Hindu theology, but the adoption of the Great Teacher as one of the incarnations of Vishnu led to the absorption of Buddhism into the Hindu fold.

Rama is revered throughout India as the model of a son, a brother and a husband. When Hindu friends meet it is usual for the ordinary salutations to be replaced by repeating the name of the god twice—"Ram—Ram." As will be pointed out in a later chapter, Ram is a very favourite name for children, and it is Rama that the devout Hindu invokes in the hour of death.

In Indian pictures Vishnu is usually shown sitting on a lotus placed on the back of a huge cobra whose head forms a canopy over the god's head. The orthodox Hindu believes that Vishnu lives in the middle of the ocean in a boat, or

island, formed by the great serpent, and that wherever the god chances to rest the ocean turns to milk!

Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, is the goddess of wealth, and sprang, like Aphrodite, from the sea foam, but the Hindu tradition is quite different from that in Greek mythology. The Hindu story is that the gods were at one time mortal, and the only way to attain immortality was to drink a beverage called ambrosia which lay at the bottom of the sea. Aspiring to have a drink of this remarkable fluid, Vishnu took the form of his second incarnation—a tortoise. There was a great struggle between the demons (who were also anxious to get at the ambrosia) and Vishnu, who was attended by his faithful serpent. The ocean was churned up so that everything from the bottom of the sea floated to the surface, including the wine goddess, Soma, the moon, a jar containing the ambrosia, and, lastly, a beautiful girl called Lakshmi! How Lakshmi, who was *not* a mermaid, lived at the bottom of the sea is not explained, but at any rate Vishnu fell in love with her and married her. He then took the form of a lovely woman and attracted the attention of the demons so that they ran after him in his feminine form and left the ambrosia to the gods, who lost no time in drinking it. In this way the gods became immortal and the demons remained subject to mortal ills.

The story of Vishnu in his incarnation as a fish is rather reminiscent of Kipling's delightful *Just So* stories. Vishnu is said to have become a fish in order to warn Manu, who was the Hindu Noah, of the coming flood. One day Manu was bathing in the Cherivi river when he heard a little fish complaining that it was very unhappy as it was the smallest fish in the river and all the other fish were trying to eat it, and if Manu would take it out of the water, it would always be grateful to him. Manu took it out and put it into a small earthen jar, but the fish grew so large that the jar soon became too small for it. He then put it in a pond, but the same thing happened again, so he threw it into the Ganges; but even this mighty stream proved too small, as

the fish grew so rapidly. At length Manu took it to the sea, and the grateful fish then warned him that a flood was coming and that he should build an ark. Further, it told him that when the ark was ready he must put out to sea, and he, the fish, would save him. In due course the flood came and Manu and his ark rode the storm, but when the waves became tumultuous and Manu was beginning to fear for his safety, the fish appeared with a great horn growing out of its head, round which it told Manu to throw a rope and it would tow him to safety. True to his word, Vishnu, the fish, towed Manu to the Himalayas, where he moored the ark safely to a mountain peak till the waters went down.

This is a curious version of the Bible story.

The eighth incarnation of Vishnu, Krishna, the handsome young herdsman, is perhaps the best beloved member of the Hindu pantheon. He shares with Rama the most popular form of Hindu worship, and is more particularly the god of the lower classes and especially of the peasants. He is believed to have grown up as an ordinary herdsman's child, and to have played with the cattle, stolen butter and milk, and got into various forms of childish mischief. Many statues of the god show him as a little boy with a pat of stolen butter in his hand. As a warrior god he displayed stupendous strength and boundless courage, and cleared the countryside of demons and monsters. One of his greatest exploits was lifting a huge mountain on his finger to shelter some milkmaids—with whom he was sporting—from the wrath of Indra, the rain-god.

Krishna was a very human sort of god, and as he had countless wives and sons and numerous amorous escapades, he is generally painted blue!

This lovable god came to his end in a curious way.

One of his sons, masquerading as a young married woman, asked the god if his first child would be a boy or a girl. The god, seeing through his offspring's disguise, told him that he would give birth to an iron club which would destroy his race. The prophecy came true, as when the graceless

son of the god took off his woman's clothes, he found an iron club in his petticoats. Fearful of the prophecy, he took all sorts of steps to destroy the club and avert the calamity, but some of the iron of which it was made was eventually formed into an arrow with which Krishna was killed.

In his coming incarnation the devout Hindu believes that Vishnu will appear riding on a white horse, and that he will drive the wicked from the world and restore the golden age.

One of the greatest allies of Vishnu in his incarnation as Rama was Hanumán, the monkey god, who is worshipped as the model of a faithful and devoted servant. He rendered great assistance to Vishnu in his battle with Ravan, the King of Ceylon, who had stolen Vishnu's wife.

Ravan obtained his dominion in Ceylon, known in ancient times as Lanka, by conquering Kubera, the god of wealth, who was the first possessor of an aeroplane, or, at any rate, an aerial carriage! Ravan took over Kubera's aerial transport and carried off Sita, Krishna's wife, in Kubera's car.

Searching for his wife, Rama made an alliance with a band of monkeys who were exiled from the monkey kingdom. He helped them to recover their kingdom, and they, in turn, helped him to lay siege to the Ceylon capital. Ravan being hard pressed, challenged Rama to single combat. Rama accepted the challenge and killed Ravan, recovered his wife and carried her off in Ravan's "aeroplane." He reigned in great splendour for many years and when he died was carried to Vishnu's heaven in the same aerial carriage in which he had lost and recovered his wife.

In North India Hanumán is the patron of every settlement, and the setting-up of his image is the outward and visible sign of the establishment of a hamlet. Naturally he is the special patron of wandering acrobats, and his shrine is often erected near a well to prevent accidents during the work of sinking. As lord of the village, his presence ensures that the water shall turn out sweet.

Such, very briefly, are the central figures in the crowded Hindu heaven, with a fragmentary sketch of the fanciful mythology which does credit to the subtle Aryan brains which have evolved it.

Besides the cults of Shiva and Vishnu, there are countless minor divinities each with its following of worshippers.

The great Hindu sect, the Saktas, worship the female principle, or rather the power or energy of the god, as represented in some of the many female forms known under various names. This ritual arose in Eastern Bengal, or Assam, about the fifth century and has its own scriptures. *It is probably a survival of very ancient aboriginal ceremonies.* The worship of the god is associated with libidinous rites, and although it has been denounced by reformers it still survives even amongst educated men.

Many Western writers have dwelt too much on the materialistic side of Hinduism and too little on its spiritual aspects. Underlying the whole of the varied and fantastic fabric of this great Faith lies the theory of the transmigration of souls and the firm belief that evil proceeds from antecedent evil and that the penalty must be suffered in succeeding existences.

It has been well said that although Hinduism has preserved numberless myths, and has incorporated much that is gross and unworthy, it has also gathered many spiritual truths from nature and the universe.

The mystic might of Hinduism is founded on three great principles—the doctrines of *Karma*, or works, *Samsara*, or metempsychosis, and *Mukti*, or release, and absorption, or union, with the Infinite.

Karma is the unavoidable consequence of good or evil acts done in this or in a past existence. "Misery and happiness in this life are the inevitable results of our conduct in a past life, and our actions here will determine our happiness or misery in the life to come. When any creature dies, he is born again in some higher or lower state of existence, according to his merit or demerit."

This doctrine and the whole Hindu outlook on life is difficult to comprehend, but it is interesting to see that there is progress amongst Europeans in attempting to understand the ideals of the Brahmans.

Mukti—or release—is the goal of the pious Hindu, and not salvation in the Western sense, and it is not without significance that the Indian name for the Salvation Army is the Mukti-fauj.

The Hindu mind is essentially mystic and transcendental, regarding all finite phenomena as evanescent and illusory, and it is interesting to find modern Christian missionaries rendering due honour and praise to the vast and beautiful religious literature of Hinduism. One writer speaks of the *Bhagavad-gita* as the Hindu Bible, and in this volume, and many others, the truth is manifested that the pure in heart, of whatever creed or race, shall see God. Despite their faults, the Hindu Scriptures represent notable stages in the progress of the human mind towards spiritual and religious evolution:

"They are but broken lights of Thee, and Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

CHAPTER IV

THE BURDEN OF CASTE

"Mankind has a passion for classifying itself; and ever since the days of Plato and Herodotus, ancient societies have been described as being divided into classes (three or four is the conventional number) which had no inter-marriage or community of interest. It was reserved for India to develop this early idea into a system of incredible complexity which survives in full force to-day, when in all other civilised countries the theory has faded into a tradition.

"The prehistoric Aryan invaders probably brought down into India some rough grading of their tribes into priests, warriors and herdsmen; and to these they may well have added as a fourth class the despised and vanquished aborigines of the land. But no census can enumerate the thousands of castes and sub-castes which now cover the country; nor can any record be attempted of all the fantastic practices, taboos and inhibitions that keep them apart and tend to multiply them. The system is the machinery by which Brahmanism holds the reins of Hindu life; it has run riot, however, and is now a grave hindrance to national union and progress."

LORD MESTON.

THE word "caste" is derived from the Portuguese word "casta" which signifies purity of breed, and was used by the Portuguese merchant adventurers under Vasco da Gama when they landed in India four centuries ago.

As Lord Meston has pointed out in the quotation which I have placed at the head of this chapter, this remarkable system of the division of the natives of a country into distinct classes is an old one, and although the claims of

Herodotus that such a division of the peoples existed amongst the Egyptians have been disputed, there is no doubt that it existed in Peru and ancient Persia, and even now is found in Africa and Polynesia. No other people, however, have erected a social structure comparable to the caste system of India. For twenty-five centuries it has controlled the whole of the life of one-sixth of the entire human race.

The origin of the system has been much debated, and it is believed that in ancient Vedic times it was unknown. It was not till about twenty-five centuries ago that the great law-giver, Manu, crystallised the laws of caste into a definite system of Hindu law.

The ancient name for caste was *varna*. The name is suggestive and has led many authorities to trace the whole system back to the colour of the skin of the first Aryan immigrants in India who gradually mingled with the dark-skinned Dravidian and aboriginal population with the consequent loss of whiteness of the complexion, and new swarms of Aryan invaders found the descendants of their predecessors dusky in hue and kept aloof from them.

The Hindus themselves refer the origin of caste to their birth from Brahma, when he caused the priestly Brahman to spring from his head, the royal Kshatriya from his shoulders, the trading and commercial Vaisya from his thighs and the menial Sudra from his feet. From these four original classes descended by myriads of sub-divisions the present hydra-headed caste organisation.

There are four main theories with regard to the genesis of caste, all of which have their adherents. The religious theory suggests that the caste system has been originated and nursed into its present proportions by the clever and cultured Brahmans in order to perpetuate their own supremacy among the peoples of India. There is a good deal to be said for this view as the acceptance of the supreme religious authority of the Brahman is one of the conditions which qualify for admission into an Indian caste.

The second theory is that caste has a tribal origin. This view is suppo ted by a census report which says: "All over India at the present moment there is going on a process of the gradual and insensible transformation of tribes into ca tes. The stages of this operation are in themselves difficult to trace. . . . They usually set up as Rajputs, their first step being to employ a Brahman priest, who invents for them a mythical ancestor, supplies them with a family miracle connected with the locality where their tribes are settled, and discovers that they belong to some hitherto unheard-of clan of the great Rajput community." Through the same process, the many Dravidian peoples and even the primitive tribes of South India have been gathered into the Hindu fold, and it is interesting to note that it is these people to-day who stand so rigidly by caste and its myriad rules.

The third theory maintains that "caste is far more a social than a religious institution; that it has no necessary connection whatever with the Hindu religion, further than that under that religion certain ideas and customs common to all primitive nations have been developed and perpetuated in an unusual degree." It is certainly true that caste may be lost through social offences, and former caste status has frequently been lost and degradation to a new caste involved by the adoption of widow marriage or some similar action.

All are, however, agreed that the most prolific source of caste alignment is trade or occupation. The whole basis of diversity of caste is diversity of occupation. The old division into Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra, and Mlechha, or outcast, who is below the Sudra, is but a division into the priest, the warrior, the husbandman, the artisan, and the Englishmen who bear such names as William Priest, John King, Edward Farmer, and James Smith are but the survivals in England of the four "varnas" of Manu. Every vocation is occupied by its own caste or castes, which may not marry or even eat with other

castes. No one can, for example, be a barber or a carpenter unless he is born one, or, in other words, unless his parents belong to a caste that has assumed such means of livelihood. Nor is any caste or occupation general throughout the country, for each province has a separate gradation of its own, so that the barbers of Calcutta are strangers to the barbers of Madras, and inter-marriage between them is impossible.

The one caste that pervades all India is the Brahman. Generally speaking, the Brahmans may be regarded in relation to the Hindus as equivalent to the Levites among the Jews. It is true that they have secured the monopoly of performing priestly duties for all Hindus except some of the lowest rank, who employ officiants drawn from their own or some other group of the same standing. But it would be a complete mistake to class all Brahmans as priests: on the contrary, only a small proportion of Brahmans practise any religious function.

Brahmans, in fact, freely engage in all callings which do not involve personal pollution, and are found in large numbers not only amongst the professional classes, and in clerical employment but in the more active occupations of agriculturists, soldiers, and policemen. It would, again, be an error to suppose that all Brahmans form one homogeneous caste, that is to say, a group the members of which freely intermarry and dine together. On the contrary, the subordinate groups classed under the general name of Brahman are practically independent of each other, and occupy very different positions in the social scale.

The offices of the Brahman include all that part of his religion which the Hindu values most highly—the initiation rites after birth, the ceremonies attending marriage, and the obsequies which assure him a place in Heaven. Even among the more intelligent classes the influence of women is strongly in favour of maintaining these traditional observances. Sects like that of the Jains, for instance, who have severed themselves in a large degree from official

Hinduism, still employ the services of a Brahman for family rites. The vast majority of the people are so wedded to custom that they show no disposition to escape from what has been called the Brahman's yoke. Indeed there is little reason why they should as this yoke is easy to bear, because it involves no inconvenient restrictions, and merely requires the payment of dues, which are regarded as respectable incidents in rites such as those of marriage and death.

It has been well said that not one of the above theories is adequate to account for all the existing castes in the country. The forces I have mentioned have entered with varying degrees into their formation, one being dominant as a casual power in one caste, and another in another. And yet it may be stated that of all these caste-producing forces, religion and occupation have had marked pre-eminence; and they are as influential to-day as ever before.

I do not think that the characteristics of caste have ever been better described than by Sir Herbert Risley some years ago: "Let us," he writes, "imagine the great tribe of Smith . . . in which all the subtle nuances of social merit and demerit have been set and hardened into positive regulations affecting the inter-marriage of families. The caste thus formed would trace its origin back to a mythical ancestor. Bound together by this tie of common descent they would recognise as the cardinal doctrine of their community the rule that a Smith must always marry a Smith, and could by no possibility marry a Brown or a Jones. But, over and above this general canon, two other modes or principles of grouping within the caste would be conspicuous. First of all, the entire caste of Smith would be split up into an indefinite number of in-marrying clans, based upon all sorts of trivial distinctions. Brewing Smiths and baking Smiths, hunting Smiths and shooting Smiths, Smiths with double-barrelled names and hyphens, Conservative Smiths and Radical Smiths, these, and all other imaginable varieties of the tribe Smith, would be, as it were, crystallised by an inexorable law forbidding the

members of any of these groups to marry beyond the circle marked out by the clan name. . . . Thus a Hyphen-Smith could only marry a Hyphen-Smith, and so on. Secondly, and this is the point which I more especially wish to bring out here, running through this endless series of clans we should find another principle at work breaking up each clan into three or four smaller groups which form a sort of ascending scale of social distinction. Thus the clan of Hyphen-Smiths, which we take to be the cream of the caste—the Smiths who have attained the crowning glory of double names securely welded together by hyphens—would be again divided into, let us say, Anglican, Dissenting, and Salvationist Hyphen-Smiths, taking ordinary rank in that order. Now the rule of these groups would be that a man of the Anglican could marry a woman of any group, that a man of the Dissenting group could marry into his own or the lowest group, while the Salvationist Smith could only marry into his own group. A woman could, under no circumstance, marry down into a group below her. Other things being equal, it is clear that two-thirds of the Anglican girls would get no husbands, and two-thirds of the Salvationist men no wives. These are some of the restrictions which would control the process of match-making among the Smiths if they were organised in a caste of the Indian type. There would also be restrictions as to food. The different in-marrying clans would be precluded from marrying together, and their possibilities of reciprocal entertainment would be limited to those products of the confectioners' shops into the composition of which water, the most fatal and effective vehicle of ceremonial impurity, had not entered. Fire purifies, water pollutes. It would follow in fact that they could eat chocolates and other sweetmeats together, but could not drink tea or coffee, and could only partake of ices if they were made without water and were served on metal, not porcelain, plates."

This little parable brings out the facts that the laws of caste prohibit members of different castes inter-marrying,

dining or smoking with each other and that marriage outside a man's caste is an absolute abomination, and even within the caste is limited by strict rules. Moreover it shows that each caste consists of groups, and the bride and bridegroom must come from different groups.

The dictates of caste in the matter of eating and drinking on which Risley has laid such stress are, perhaps, the most difficult for Europeans to understand. Not only must a man eat only with his own caste people, but he must be most scrupulous as to the source of the articles which he intends to eat; he must know who handled them, and especially who cooked them. Some articles of food, such as fruit, are not subject to pollution; while others, and pre-eminently water, have to be very carefully guarded against the polluting touch of lower castes. Different castes prescribe different articles of diet; meat, generally speaking, is not eaten by orthodox Hindus, but quite respectable castes will eat chicken, others mutton, whilst the lordly Rajput is very fond of pork.

No sin is regarded by the orthodox Hindu with more horror than that of killing and eating the flesh of the cow—which as we shall see is the most sacred of all the Indian animals.

Even the shadow of a member of a lower class will pollute a high-caste Brahman at a distance of several feet, and passing through the lines of an Indian regiment with the Colonel, I have seen his shadow fall on the rude fire-place where a Dogra was cooking his food. The shadow had caused pollution, and the sepoy immediately got up and threw away the unleavened bread which he was preparing.

Caste guides the Hindu in every aspect of life, it finds his religious observances, prescribes pilgrimages, marriage forms and arranges for divorce. Above all it lays down a very strict ritual to be observed in the disposal of his remains when he dies.

A curious feature of the caste system is what is called the "totemistic cult," which the Brahmans, in absorbing

the Dravidian settlers, have incorporated into their system. In Southern India, Frazer points out that certain castes are broken up into a number of septs, each bearing the name of a plant, an animal, a tree, or some material object, natural or artificial, which the members of the sept are prohibited from tilling, eating, cutting, burning, carrying or using in any shape or form. These communities believe themselves to be of one blood, and strictly refuse to sanction the marriage or cohabitation of members of the group with each other.

The penalties inflicted by violation of caste are many and severe, and the agencies through which caste penalises its members are manifold, and each local caste organisation is able to deal with infractions of its rules.

The curious thing is that the educated classes are as much in the bondage of caste as the others, and graduates of Western universities who discourse in perfect English on human rights and the bondage of caste tyranny, in their own homes submit to the rules of caste as rigidly as their less enlightened neighbours.

It is interesting to observe the way in which the Hindu, surrounded by the iron wall of caste, adopts Western conveniences. The post office, telegraph, telephone, and above all, the railroad and the motor-car have been adopted eagerly by all Indians. The Brahman will not forego the conveniences of the "iron road and the fire-carriage" even although it involves sitting for hours cheek by cheek with low-caste fellow passengers. An American writer describes the British Government as a great leveller: "In all its gifts of offices, in all posts of honour and influence, it distributes its blessings with strict impartiality, so far as caste is concerned. It wisely ignores all social distinctions and depends upon qualifications of culture and character when it seeks men to conduct its affairs. This is something unprecedented in the land of Manu. That the outcast should stand an equal chance with the high-castes for positions of honour and emolument was unknown in this land of sharp distinctions.

"And even more fundamental than this is the blessing of equal personal and political rights. In ancient India, such an idea was never entertained. Before British rule entered the land it was never dreamed that priest, prince, and beggar—and that Brahman and Pariah—had equal rights before the law. To-day they all recognise the justice of this and expect it."

This observer sees caste as an obstacle to the growth of nationality as it contracts the radius of sympathy. "On the other hand, caste must be held to have had good results as well as evil. Some observers think that caste has preserved Hindu society through many stormy centuries in a way which nothing else could have done. And it is certain that within the narrow range of its operation caste has the power of tightening men's sympathies and maintaining traditional morality and promoting common action. How far or fast caste is likely to decay in future it is hard to say. Reform movements in Hinduism, education, and freer travel tend slowly to erode it; and it may be that the growing desire to achieve national status will come in powerfully to reinforce these causes."

It is a notable fact that the earlier Christian missionaries regarded caste as essential to Indian conditions and adopted a caste system themselves.

CHAPTER V

LIGHTENING THE LOAD

"He is of the Khalsa
Who protects the poor,
Who combats evil,
Who remembers God."

The Rules of Guru Govind.

THE rules of caste had already drawn rigid barriers between class and class in the sixth century before Christ, and in those distant days the need for reform had manifested itself.

About the time that Thales, the most ancient philosopher of Europe, was teaching in Greece that water is the origin of all things, and Zoroaster was systematising the worship of the Magi in Persia, and Confucius was calling on the teeming multitudes around him in China to offer to guardian spirits and the manes of their ancestors, and Nebuchadnezzar was setting up his golden image in the plains of Dura, and Daniel was labouring in Babylon to establish Monotheism in Judea, a reverend sage, with his staff and scrip, who had left a throne for philosophy, was travelling from Gya to Benares, and from Benares to Kanauj, exhorting the people against theft, falsehood, adultery, and intemperance.

His name was Gautama Buddha, and he was the founder of the first of the great reform movements which have endeavoured to lighten the load of the sufferer from caste. His history is a mixture of exquisitely beautiful and extremely grotesque legends, and some of them resemble so strangely the stories related of the birth and childhood of Christ

that it has been suggested that they were borrowed centuries after the death of Buddha from the Nestorian Church of Southern India.

The early life of Buddha was that of an ordinary Hindu prince of the period up to the age of twenty-nine when he made "the great renunciation" and left his happy home, his beloved wife and his child and gave himself up to the life of a religious mendicant. He inflicted upon himself frightful torture, and his fame as an ascetic rang through the land "like the sound of a great bell hung in the heavens." He would probably have died as the result of his long course of penance had not a herdsman's daughter revived him with a draught of milk. He decided to return to ordinary life, and then "enlightenment," as the Indians style it, or "conversion" as it is named by Christians, broke suddenly on him as a final answer to all his perplexities.

Buddha accepted the old Hindu doctrine of transmigration as it provided a scheme of justice, for every deed either good or bad brings its own reward or punishment. He founded a religious system which stands almost alone as there are no Divine Beings, neither Heaven nor Hell, yet everything depends on a high moral code. The supreme aim is Nirvana, or Nothingness. The way to this goal is seven-fold—right thought, right aspirations, right speaking, right living, right self-discipline, right mindedness, right contemplation.

The Buddhist saint:

"Looks down on the vain world and careworn crowd
As he who stands upon a mountain-top
Watching, serene himself, the toilers in the plain."

Buddha returned to Benares, the holiest centre of the Hindu faith, and there commenced his career as a teacher. He preached social equality, sex equality and the conversion of others, thus confronting with three-fold strength the three great "planks" of Hinduism. He captured the

mystic heart of ancient India, and converts flocked to the new creed.

The Buddhist doctrine has been described as a hopeless and godless faith with some excellent moral rules attached to it, but in reality it is far from pessimistic as it teaches the certainty of putting an end to sorrow and infinite opportunities for beginning again after failure.

It has been well said that Buddhism is the embodiment of the eternal truth that as a man sows so shall he reap, associated with personal responsibilities, mastery over self and kindness to all men. Like Christianity, it was quickened into a popular religion by the example of a noble and beautiful life.

Frazer draws a parallel between Christianity and Buddhism. He says: "Both systems were in their origin essentially ethical reforms born of the generous ardour, the lofty aspirations, the tender compassion of their noble Founders, two of those beautiful spirits who appear at rare intervals on earth like beings come from a better world to support and guide our weak and erring nature. Both preached moral virtue as the means of accomplishing what they regarded as the supreme object of life, the eternal salvation of the individual soul, though by a curious antithesis the one sought that salvation in a blissful eternity, the other in a final release from suffering, in annihilation. But the austere ideals of sanctity which they inculcated were too deeply opposed not only to the frailties but to the natural instincts of humanity ever to be carried out in practice by more than a small number of disciples, who consistently renounced the ties of the family and the state in order to work out their own salvation in the still seclusion of the cloister. If such faiths were to be nominally accepted by whole nations or even by the world, it was essential that they should first be modified or transformed so as to accord in some measure with the prejudices, the passions, the superstitions of the vulgar. This process of accommodation was carried out in after ages by followers who, made of

less ethereal stuff than their masters, were for that reason the better fitted to meditate between them and the common herd. Thus as time went on, the two religions, in exact proportion to their growing popularity, absorbed more and more of those baser elements which they had been instituted for the very purpose of suppressing. Such spiritual decadencies are inevitable. The world cannot live at the level of its great men. Yet it would be unfair to the generality of our kind to ascribe wholly to their intellectual and moral weakness the gradual divergence of Buddhism, and Christianity from their primitive patterns. For it should never be forgotten that by their glorification of poverty and celibacy both these religions struck straight at the root not merely of civil society but of human existence. The blow was parried by the wisdom, or the folly, of the vast majority of mankind, who refused to purchase a chance of saving their souls with the certainty of extinguishing the species."

We have seen how Asoka built up a great Buddhist empire, but as time advanced it was debased by contact with the idolatry and foul Tantric beliefs which it had never succeeded in extirpating, and Brahmanism reconstituted on a more popular basis, and giving shelter to the Animism of the lower races and village gods, gradually reasserted its superiority. Buddhism, survived in an attenuated form up to the end of the twelfth century of our era, when the Mohammedan invasions upset the Hindu dynasties of North India. Finally, it disappeared, not so much as the result of direct persecution, but rather from internal decay, the main cause of which is that it was, and is, in a great measure a religion for monks, with which the laity have little concern.

Not the least important factor in the Hindu revival was the cleverness of the Brahmans in adopting Buddha, as has already been pointed out, as an incarnation of Vishnu, and indeed some famous Buddhist monuments have been converted into Hindu shrines. Now Buddhism has disap-

peared from the Peninsula proper and only survives in the far-off Himalayas, Burma and Ceylon.

In Burma there are still millions of Buddhists, but here as elsewhere the nominal profession of the creed of Gautama has not been found incompatible with a genuine, if surreptitious, allegiance to the gods of an earlier age. "The existence of spirits, kindly or malevolent, as the case may be, is the fact that from time immemorial has been laid hold of and assimilated by the religious instinct of the native, and this ingrained conception the Burman has refused to cast off, with his acceptance of the loftier truths of Buddhism. He has disguised it, that is all; if, in truth, it can be called a disguise, which is so unblushingly apparent. Hence Burman Buddhism is a thin veneer of philosophy laid over the main structure of Shamanistic belief."

Almost contemporary with Buddha arose another princely teacher, Mahavira, who founded a religious system known as Jainism. It has been suggested that the cause which led to the foundation of both Buddhism and Jainism was the monopoly which the Brahmans claimed of entrance into the Monastic Orders. The leaders in both these movements were members of the Kshatriya or warrior caste, and both sects had their origin about the same time and in the same part of the country, Magadha, the modern Behar.

Mahavira first entered one of the Hindu Monastic Orders, but subsequently founded an order of his own, of a more rigorous type, one of the chief rules of which was absolute nudity. He gained the title of Jina, or "spiritual conqueror," from the rigour of his austerities, and from this the name of Jaina is derived.

The attitude of the Jains is to glorify all created objects. They believe that animals and even inanimate objects have souls just as much as human beings, and that a man's soul may pass into a stone! They brush seats before sitting down and drink only water that has been strained and never leave it uncovered lest some insect should get drowned in it. There are four classes in the creed,

monks, nuns, lay-brothers and lay-sisters. They reject the whole of the Hindu pantheon and the Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana, or extinction. They believe in a Heaven and worship saints who have attained the perfection of spiritual life. There are no less than seventy-two of these saints, twenty-four representing the past, twenty-four the present, and twenty-four the future. In imitation of the founder, all figures of the Saints are naked.

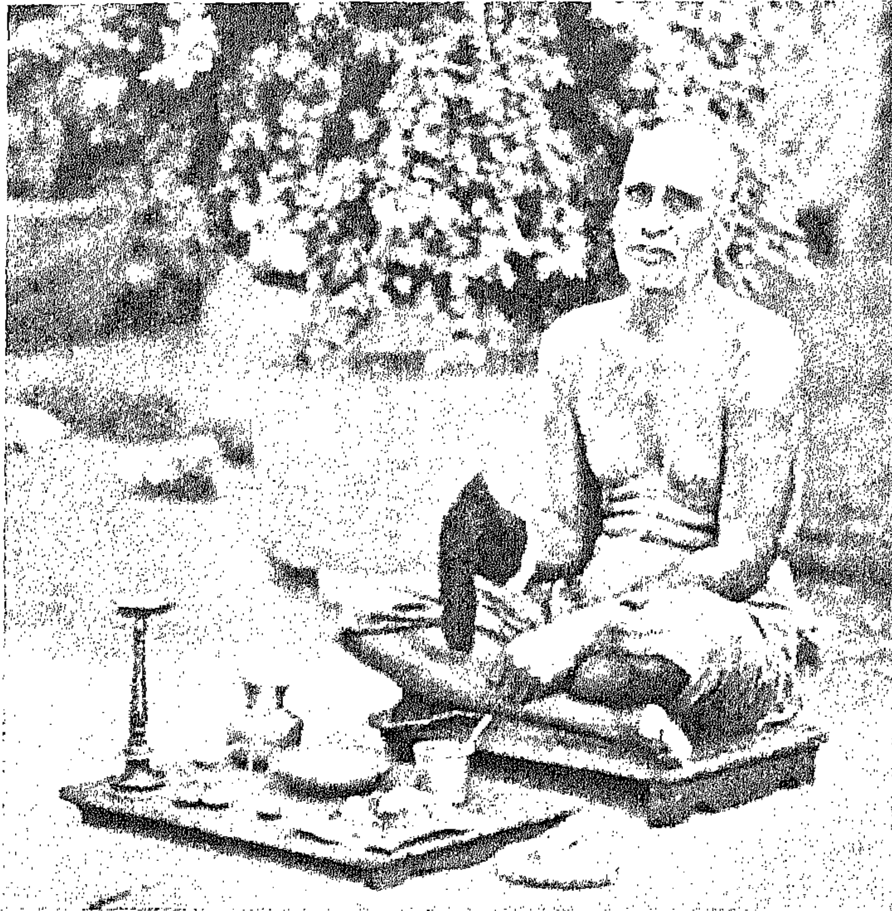
A Jain must practise abstinence, continence and silence, and visit his temple daily. During certain seasons of the year they are very careful about their diet and abstain from honey, certain fruits, salt, tobacco and other articles. The Jains are now a wealthy and influential body numbering about a million and a half. They are found mostly in the western district of India, but have formed colonies in all the great trading centres.

Jainism is outstanding for its magnificent and profusely ornamented shrines which have been erected by pious members of the powerful commercial class who constitute the majority of the followers of this religion.

As Mr. Fergusson observes: "Building a temple is with them a prayer in stone, which they conceive to be eminently acceptable to the deity, and likely to assure them benefits both here and hereafter."

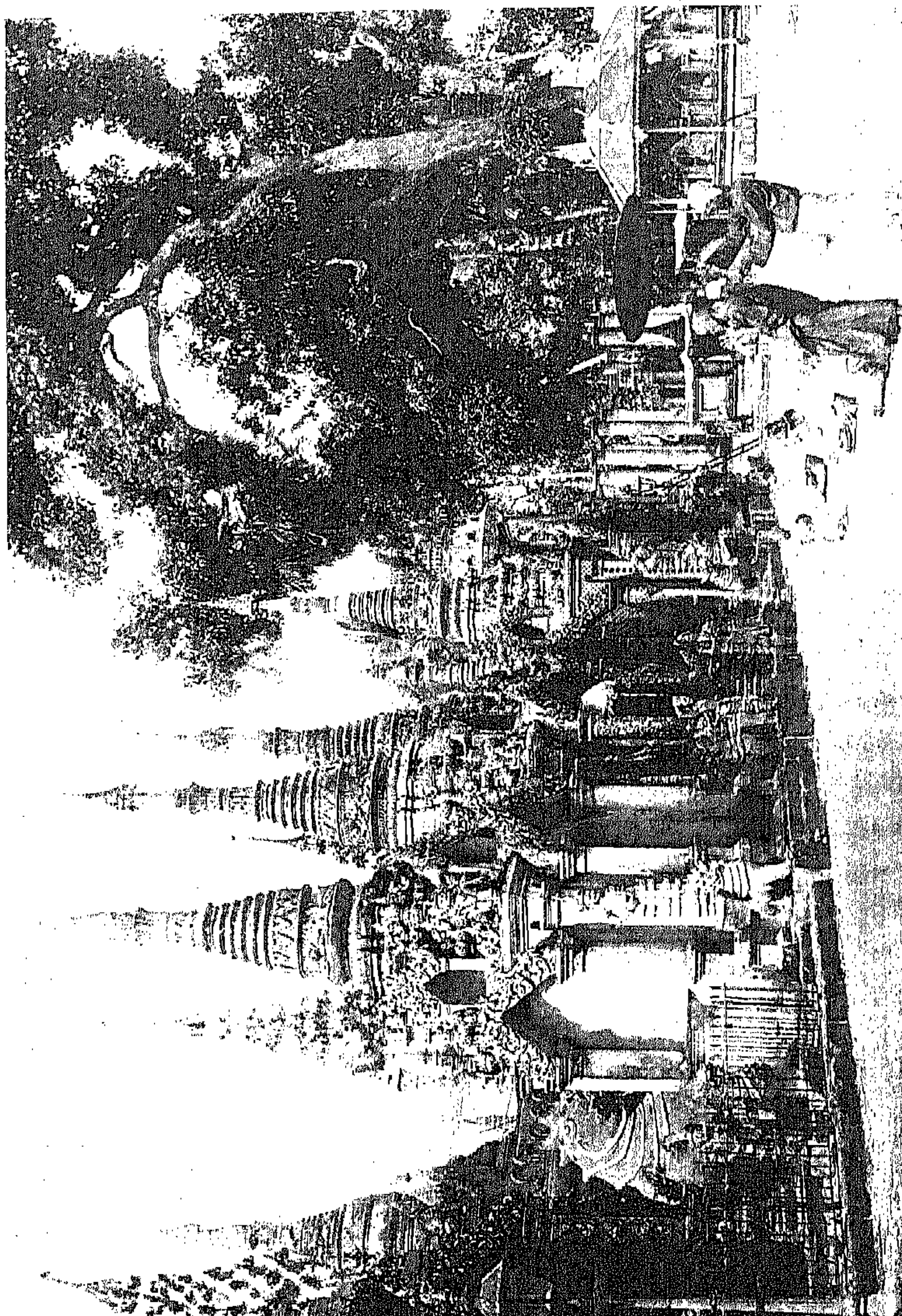
The Jains maintain what are called *pinjrapoles*, or hospitals for animals who are suffering from any sickness or illness. The animals are treated with the greatest kindness, and these hospitals are amongst one of the most remarkable of Indian Institutions. Even insects are given the greatest consideration, and a story is related of a hospital at Surat where a poor man is hired to sleep in one of the wards at night so as to provide nourishment for fleas, lice and bugs who are "patients" in the pinjrapole!

In the latter half of the fifteenth century, a brotherhood of Hindus arose open to all castes and all degrees. "In its origin," writes Sir D. Ibbetson, "Sikhism had much in common with Buddhism. Nanak and Buddha alike re-



A Brahman at Prayers

[*Face page* 62



A Buddhist Temple

Face page 63]

volted against a religion overladen with ceremonial and social restrictions, both rebelled against the sore burdens which the priests would have them bear, the tendency of both was to quietism. But the form which the doctrines of each assumed was largely influenced by their surroundings. Buddha lived in the centre of Hindu India, and among the many gods of the Brahmans; these he rejected; he knew of nought else; and he preached that there was no God. Nanak was brought up in the Province which then formed the border-land between Hinduism and Islam; he was brought up under the shadow of the monotheism of Mahomet, and he taught that there was one God. But that God was neither Allah nor Parmeshar, but simply God—neither the God of the Mussulman nor of the Hindu, but the God of the universe, of all mankind, and of all religions."

The founder of the new sect, Nanak, was the son of a grain merchant, who, like Saint Francis of Assisi, left his father's house and wandered throughout the world with only the "Lady Poverty" as his companion. Over the length and breadth of India he travelled, through Persia and to Mecca, seeking out in all places holy men and priests of every religion, that from them he might learn "the Way." He read the sacred books of Brahman and Mullah, he meditated in solitude, he worshipped at shrine after shrine; but what he sought was not to be found in the Vedas or the Koran. At length illumination came upon him, and "One God, One Way" was Nanak's cry henceforth. And thus, in a land where the most trivial act is hedged about with restrictions, where for centuries men have sought to win heaven by accumulating penance upon penance, he taught that to find salvation it was not necessary to forsake the ordinary duties of mankind, or to hold apart from other men. He set the example by going back to his own home, and living with his wife and children whom he had forsaken when he went out to find "the Way." He refused to wear the sacred thread of the Hindus. "Make mercy thy cotton, contentment its thread, continence its knot, and truth its

twist," he said to a Brahman disciple; and to a Mohammedan his counsel was, "Make kindness thy mosque, sincerity thy prayer-carpet, the will of God thy rosary."

Nanak was succeeded by nine other Gurus, or teachers, who inveighed against caste and finally abolished it establishing a new faith as proclaimed in Sacred writings which were styled the Granth Sahib. The Granth is placed in the Golden Temple which stands in the centre of a tank "the Pool of the Water of Life" on a piece of land given to the third successor of Nanak by Akbar. This Golden Temple is to the Sikh what Mecca is to the Mohammedan and Benares to the Hindu. In the Pool, Sikhs are baptised into their religion by water, and in the Temple the only symbol of the Faith is the Sacred Book from which white-robed priests read to the assembled worshippers. "The Book" is treated with the greatest possible reverence, and when it is carried in procession jewelled canopies are borne over it and brooms of peacock feathers sweep the dust of the worshippers from the Temple floor.

The true Sikh never cuts his hair or beard, he wears short drawers ending at the knee and must always wear an iron bangle and a comb and carry a steel knife.

Sikhs, like Christians, are admitted to their Faith by baptism, and they preserve a form of communion in which the Sacramental food is distributed to all present irrespective of caste.

Gradually the Sikhs developed into a great military brotherhood, and, at the fall of its Moghul rulers, became masters of the Punjab. The great kingdom which they established came into conflict with the British, but since the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, Sikh soldiers have been amongst the strongest bulwarks of the King Emperor's throne.

The Sikh is no longer a son of the sword, but his freedom from the prejudice of caste gives him an advantage over his Hindu brethren, and he is a great wanderer and a very clever craftsman. Sikhs may be found in all parts of the

East engaged in engineering and other similar occupations. In the present century there has been a development of the communal spirit amongst the Sikhs based on memories of their former political importance, and fostered by recent political developments in India.

There has been a demand for reform with reference to the Sikh religious institutions, and there have been disturbances caused by a section of Sikhs who adopted the name of "Akali," a traditional name for Sikh devotees.

For nearly three centuries Sikhism remained the last attempt to reform the Mystic Might of Hinduism, but in the last century another great teacher Raja Ram Mohun Roi arose and founded a reformed Theistic sect, based on a belief in the unity of the Godhead, the brotherhood of man and direct communion with God in the spirit. The sect has split up into three groups differing more in their ritualistic than religious views. "The Adi Samaj, the oldest and most Conservative section, clings more closely to Hindu beliefs and to the system of caste; the Nabidhan Samaj, or 'New Dispensation,' is more advanced, and seeks to assimilate what it finds best, not only in the sacred books of Hinduism, but in those of Islam and Christianity. The third section, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, is the most Liberal in its views, as shown in the rejection of caste and of all that is ordinarily regarded as essential to Hinduism."

The tendency of modern Hinduism to develop on its own lines and not in response to missionary effort is demonstrated by the growth of the Arya Samaj which has many more adherents than the Brahmo Samaj.

This sect was founded by a Gujarati Brahman, Dyanand Saraswati, who preached a doctrine of "Back to the Vedas"; and advocated social reform in caste restrictions and condemned child marriage.

The members of this advanced community are divided on the lawfulness of using animal food, the vegetarians representing the conservative element, while the "cultured" party advocates the use of meat. In strange contrast to

this advanced theistic teaching is the exaggerated belief in the sanctity of the cow, and indeed the whole outlook of the adherents of this reformed creed is strongly opposed to Western thought and science.

The presence of these two communities in modern Hinduism is evidence of a growing tendency to monotheism, and towards social reform in regard to the restrictions of caste.

The educated Hindu, however, believes that his great social system can work out its own salvation, and the reformer of to-day shows little inclination to become a nonconformist as he is confident that it is quite possible to lighten the load of the burden of caste within the limits of orthodoxy.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPLENDID SIMPLICITY OF ISLAM

"O God, in every temple I see those who see thee, and, in every tongue that is spoken, thou art praised.
Polytheism and Islam grope after thee,
Each religion says, 'Thou art one, without equal,'
Be it mosque, men murmur holy prayer; or church, the bells ring, for love of thee;
Awhile I frequent the Christian cloister, anon the mosque:
But thee only I seek from fane to fane.
Thine elect know naught of heresy or orthodoxy, whereof neither stands behind the screen of thy truth.
Heresy to the heretic,—dogma to the orthodox,—
But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume-seller."

ABDUL FAZL.

FROM the writings of a great many recent authors, the readers might form the impression that India is entirely a Hindu country. This is very far from being the fact, as out of every hundred persons in the Indian Empire less than seventy are Hindus and more than twenty are Mohammedans.

This is very remarkable, as the first connection of the Mohammedans with India was not till the seventh or eighth century, and then it was only along the old coastal route between Arabia and Western India when the seat of power of the Caliphate was at Baghdad. It was not till the eleventh century that the famous Mahmud of Ghazni commenced to invade India, so that the Hindus had a start of many centuries on the sons of Islam.

At the dawn of the seventh century, a quiet, thoughtful man began to preach a new religion. Mecca was at this

time a town of considerable importance. Mohammed conceived the idea of an Almighty God who had made him his prophet to establish a new heaven and a new earth. His wife was the first to believe in his revelations and to abandon the idolatries of her people and join him in purity of heart in offering up prayers to the Almighty and All-merciful.

The boyhood of Mohammed was in no way remarkable. He was a posthumous child, and his mother lived only till the boy was seven years old. His father, Abdallah, had come of good Arab stock. After living for some time in his grandfather's house, on his death Mohammed was adopted by his uncle, Abu Talib.

The boy spent his early days herding flocks of sheep and looking after his uncle's camels. He had little or no education, and seems to have been a boy of a quiet, brooding nature and to have suffered from fits which were probably epileptic.

Mohammed's grandfather was a man of considerable standing, as he was in charge of the Temple and Holy Well at Mecca, but his uncle was a poor man, and up to the age of twenty-six Mohammed worked hard for his living like every young Arab. He then had the good fortune to marry a wealthy widow much older than himself, and there is no doubt that this fortunate marriage gave him an opportunity of devoting himself to his religious work. He belonged to the Koreish tribe which worshipped a tribal god called Hobal, and several other deities belonging to other tribes. The local sanctuary at Mecca where he worshipped contained images of these gods, and also, more sacred than all, the famous "black stone" of Mecca built into the walls of the "Kaaba," and held traditionally to have been brought down by the angel Gabriel from Heaven.

Mohammed, like all the members of the Arab tribes of the period, had to take his share as a fighting man, but in his early days this great military leader of the future does not seem to have distinguished himself in tribal warfare, or to have displayed any military instincts. After his

marriage Mohammed seems to have settled down to being a partner in what would correspond to a modern grocer's shop. In his thirty-fifth year, when the Kaaba, or great sanctuary, was wrecked by a storm, no one could be found plucky enough to replace the sacred stone, and it had finally to be decided that the first person to enter the court by chance should undertake the task. Mohammed happened to be the first to enter the court and the honour fell to him.

After this first appearance as a celebrity Mohammed appears to have retired with his wife to a cave in Mount Hira, and there to have had visions and religious ecstasies. Here he declared the angel Gabriel appeared to him and proclaimed him a prophet, and here he invented the famous formula, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God." For the first few years the Prophet had no helpers in his missionary work, which was confined to his own teaching and that of his wife and faithful slave, Zaid.

The divine revelations to Mohammed became frequent, and he uttered messages which were carefully written down; they formed the beginning of the Koran. The chief doctrines in the Koran are that there is but one God, one true religion, a day of judgment, and that at certain times God sends into the world prophets, and the greatest of these were Moses, Christ and Mohammed.

Of course this book did not come into existence until long after the death of Mohammed, when it was compiled by order of the Caliph by the prophet's secretary.

The Koran is full of material taken from the Bible, and it seems evident that the original ideal of Mohammed was to unite under one great prophet the Semitic religions of Judaism and Christianity, and to bring into the monotheistic fold the various pagan forms of worship prevalent at the time.

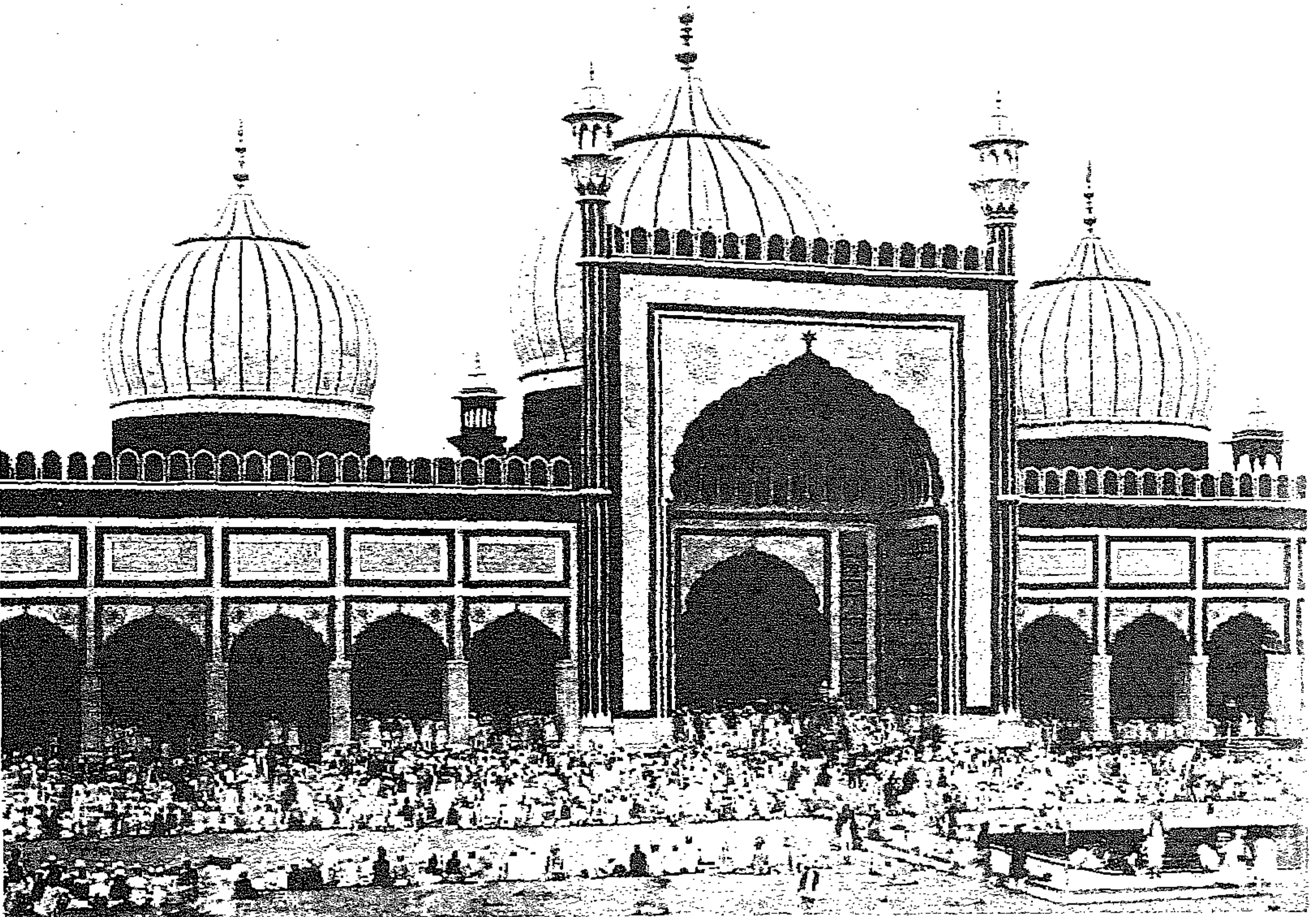
Mohammed's first great sermon was delivered, like the Sermon on the Mount, on the hills of Safa, where he eventually proclaimed himself the prophet of all Arabia. He then preached in Mecca itself, denouncing the worship of

images and declaring that there is no God but Allah. Mohammed made a strong human appeal by meeting the pessimistic outlook of such faiths as Buddhism and Hinduism and announcing that there was an actual heaven for true believers and an actual hell in which eternal punishment took place. Indeed, the Koran contains vivid pictures of the rewards of the faithful and the punishment of the idolators. His followers were called "Moslems," a name of doubtful origin.

The prophet was cruelly used by his fellow-townsmen, and he was obliged to flee from the wrath of the Meccans to Yathrib, afterwards known as Medina. This is the Hegira, or flight, which took place on the 22nd September, A.D. 622. It is from this event that the Moslem chronology commences to date. The prophet bound his followers together by the strongest ties, causing them to intermarry, and he himself contracted several matrimonial alliances, one being his union with the famous Ayesha, whom he married at the age of nine.

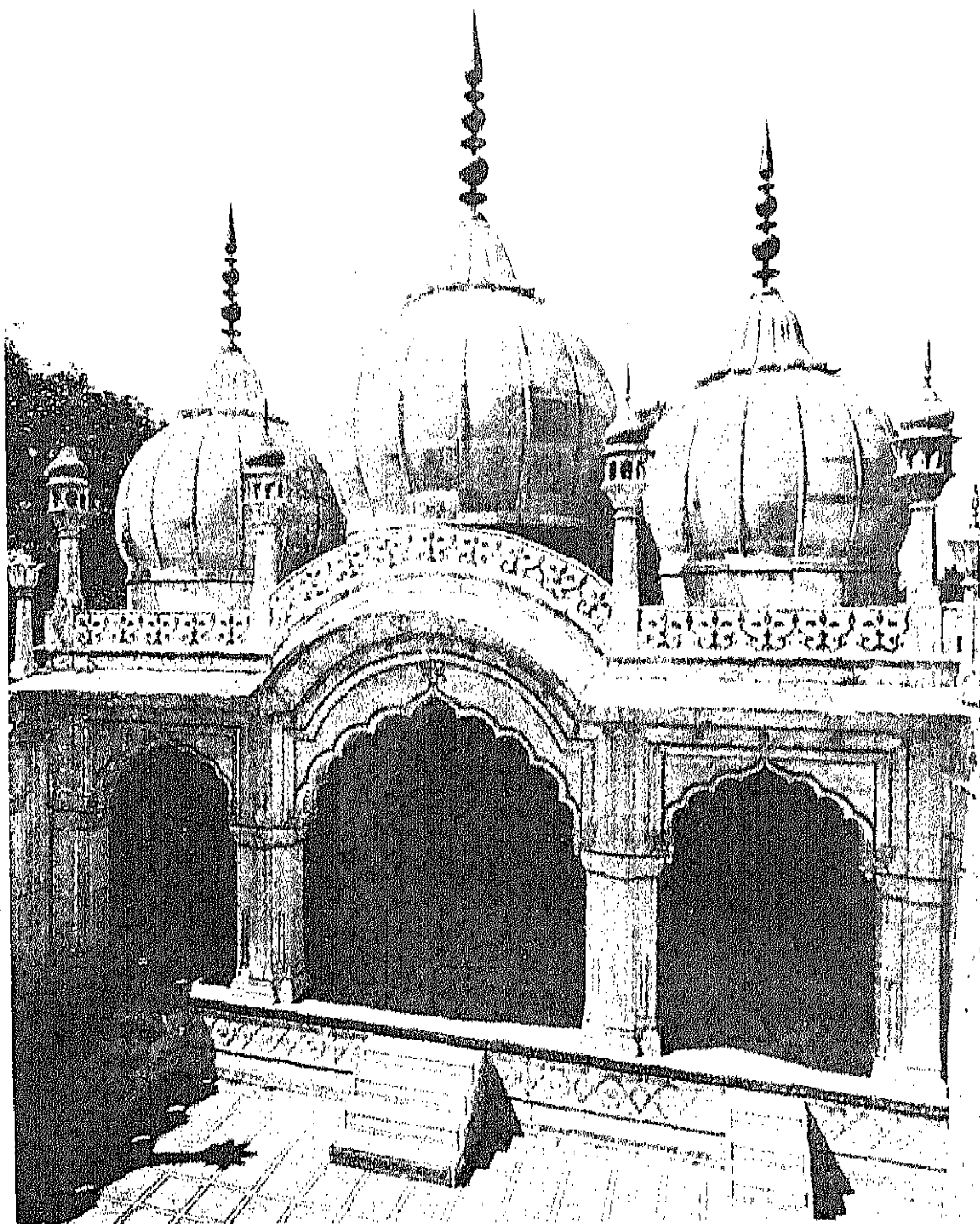
The first Mohammedan mosque was built at Medina, and here was formulated the simple ceremonial of Moslem worship. Mohammed was at first extremely anxious to conciliate the Jews, and so much of his doctrine was based on their religion. He directed his followers to turn towards Jerusalem at prayer, and he copied the Jews by establishing a special day for prayer, and chose Friday as the Moslem sacred day of the week. He also probably copied the Jewish laws of fasting by enforcing the Fast of Ramadan, a period when no food may be eaten from sunrise to sunset, which seems to be a development of the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month, which the Children of Israel are directed to keep. "In the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath . . . and ye shall afflict your souls."

Mohammed showed great originality and imagination in establishing the "muezzin," or call to prayer, which is one of the most picturesque features of Mohammedan ritual.



THE JUMA MASJID: THE CATHEDRAL MOSQUE OF DELHI

[*Face page* 70



THE PEARL MOSQUE

Face page 71]

Having established his faith at Medina, Mohammed, who, as we have seen, had hitherto shown no warlike qualities, developed into a military leader, and he organised his followers into regiments, if we can apply that name to what were really bands of plunderers. Obviously his raiding expeditions were very popular, as the loot of the surrounding country was considerable, and by A.D. 630 he was able to lead a strong army of ten thousand men against his native town, which he easily subdued. With the most sacred city of Arabia under his dominion, Mohammed became to all intents and purposes the Prophet and King of the country. Converts flocked to his white banner, and in a year the strength of his army grew from ten thousand to thirty thousand men. The faith he preached was well adapted to a warlike nation, and his soldiers became fanatical zealots who died cheerfully to win the paradise which the preaching of their prophet promised. Ameer Ali says that "the mercy of the Almighty is one of the grandest themes of the Koran. The very name with which each chapter opens, and with which He is invoked, expresses a deep, all-penetrating conviction of that love, that divine mercy, which enfolds creation;" but the armies of Mohammed showed mighty little of this mercy in their early campaigns. They fulfilled, to the letter, the command of the founder of their faith, which says: "When ye encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads, until ye have made a great slaughter among them; and bind them in bonds; and either give them a free dismission afterwards, or exact a ransom; until the war shall have laid down its arms. This shall ye do." (Koran, xlviii, 4, 5.) All who would not adopt the formula, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet," were ruthlessly put to the sword.

The remainder of Mohammed's life was a succession of victories. He died at the age of sixty-three, and was buried at Medina. In a comparatively short period he had given to the world a new religion which was originally designed to present the Almighty as a God of love, but eventually

represented Him as "a pitiless tyrant, who plays with humanity as on a chess-board, and works out His game without regard to the sacrifice of the pieces."

The creed is a very simple one and it is all contained in the famous formula which I have quoted above, but an unbeliever, however virtuous, if he does not acknowledge Mohammed as the prophet of God, is damned for ever.

However, Mohammed rendered a tremendous service to the world: he lifted Arabia from the ignorant worship of degraded gods to a much higher plane. He insisted on the virtues of prayer, abstinence from alcohol, fasting and a great measure of cleanliness. The Koran is the record of his sayings and of the revelations of God to His prophet. It embraces the whole teaching of Islam and lays down certain rules for the guidance of the individual. The first of these is daily worship, with the face turned towards Mecca. The second is, as we have mentioned above, a long *fast corresponding more or less to the Christian Lent, but* infinitely more severe in its restrictions. The third, a pilgrimage, once in a lifetime, to Mecca. Lastly, but perhaps most important of all, charity towards the poor.

The status of women in Islam is often said to be a blot on a great faith, but Ameer Ali points out that Mohammed created a very real improvement in their condition. He denounced, in burning terms, the practice which existed in his day of burying alive female children. "Mohammed enforced as one of the essential teachings of his creed 'respect for women.' And his followers, in their love and reverence for his celebrated daughter, proclaimed her 'the Lady of Paradise,' as the representative of her sex." "Our Lady of Light" is the embodiment of all that is divine in womanhood, of all that is pure and true and holy in her sex, the noblest ideal of human conception. And she has been followed by a long succession of women, who have consecrated their sex by their virtues. Who has not heard of the saintly Râbia and a thousand others her equals?

In the laws which the Arabian Prophet promulgated he

strictly prohibited the custom of conditional marriages, and though at first temporary marriages were tacitly allowed in the third year of the Hegira even these were forbidden. Mohammed secured to women, in his system, rights which they had not before possessed; he allowed them privileges the value of which will be more fully appreciated as time advances. He placed them on a footing of perfect equality with men in the exercise of all legal powers and functions. He restrained polygamy by limiting the maximum number of contemporaneous marriages, and by making absolute equity towards all obligatory on the man. It is worthy of note that the clause in the Koran which contains the permission to contract four contemporaneous marriages, is immediately followed by a sentence which cuts down the significance of the preceding passage to its normal and legitimate dimensions. The passage runs thus: "You may marry, two, three or four wives, but not more." The subsequent lines declare, "but if you cannot deal equitably and justly with all, you shall marry only one." The extreme importance of this proviso, bearing especially in mind the meaning which is attached to the word "equity" (adl) in the Koranic teachings, has not been lost sight of by the great thinkers of the Moslem world. Even so early as the third century of the Hegira, during the reign of al-Mâmûn, the first Mutazalite doctors taught that the developed Koranic laws inculcated monogamy. And though the cruel persecutions of the mad bigot, Mutawakkil, prevented the general diffusion of their teachings, the conviction is gradually forcing itself on all sides, in all advanced Moslem communities, that polygamy is as much opposed to the teachings of Mohammed as it is to the general progress of civilised society and true culture."

Ameer Ali goes so far as to say that for his own part he looks on polygamy in the present day "as an adulterous connection and as contrary to the spirit of Islam, an opinion which is shared by a large number of Mussulmans."

We need not follow the various Mohammedan invasions of

India and the religious zeal which was sometimes characterized by acts which no Moslem would approve to-day, but it is evident that Moslem rule was not quite so bloodthirsty as some writers would have us believe.

There was Moslem rule in Northern India for some seven hundred years, and yet the Hindus everywhere outnumber the followers of Islam. One reason given is that the early conquerors were too busy establishing themselves to be able to proselytize; another lies in the wonderful power of Hinduism to absorb all religions. Thus we find to this day, sects in existence partly Hindu and partly Moslem.

The early followers of the Prophet were fired with the conviction that their religion was essential to salvation, and they firmly believed that in passing on to others not only their creed but its sublime possibilities, they were conferring a real benefit on humanity. The sword of Islam is a soldier's creed, but it must be recognized that in many a land, and especially in India, Islam has produced its saints. Many Moslems have sought God in the quiet of contemplation, prayer and meditation. One leader, urging the value of spontaneous prayer, says: "At the conclusion of your formal prayers offer your humble petitions and thanksgiving and expect an answer."

The effect of the Mohammedan occupation on India has been constructive and profound. The sons of the Prophet have given to India many great legacies, amongst which a new vernacular and a multitude of exquisite monuments are perhaps the least.

The Faith has prohibited the use of intoxicating drinks to which not a few Hindus are addicted. The Mohammedan of India is a sober man and his abstemious habits are often an example to the unbeliever. The Punjabi Mussulman is a splendid and faithful soldier, and holds his head high even in a country which has produced such sons of the sword as the Sikh, the Rajput, the Pathan and the Ghoorkha.

Islam also enforces the law against usury among its followers. Like the Jew, the Mohammedan has been

strictly forbidden to make money by the use of money. And, though they find ways of evading this law, to some extent, the ideal which they have before them is a restraint and a blessing in a land where the usurer is a ubiquitous curse, because of his rapacity and the expertness with which he draws the common people into his net and leads millions to financial loss and ruin.

The supreme place given in this faith to the duty of alms-giving and the effective way with which it is carried out among its members, is another praiseworthy feature. At the time of their political rule and extensive sway there was a well-known tax whose purpose was to carry relief to the poor and the suffering. And Mohammedans feel to-day that there is hardly a religious duty which is more sacred and carries with it more of reward than that of distributing alms to the poor. Far more than Christianity, Islam gives importance and distinction to this special form of its religious activity.

The observance by the Moslem of the five seasons of daily prayer is constant testimony to the value of a living faith. Many a time have I been impressed by the way Mohammedans faithfully and boldly observe this rule and privilege of their creed by spreading their mats in most unexpected places, even in the presence of gaping crowds, and prostrating themselves in prayer with their faces Mecca-ward as a proof of their sincere devotion to their great religion.

Moreover, Islam must be added to the great organizations I have referred to which have aimed at lightening the burden of caste.

Islam is neither founded upon race, colour, nor nationality. It has been well said that in Islam "all believers belong to the highest caste." It recognizes to the full the brotherhood of all the members of its faith. Even its slaves have been exalted to its throne and have achieved the highest distinctions. "On its social side, the religion of Mohammed is opposed to the Hindu scheme of a hierarchy of castes, an elaborate stratification of society based upon subtle

distinctions of food, dress, drink, marriage, and ceremonial usage. In the sight of God and of His Prophet all followers of Islam are equal. In India, however, caste is in the air; its contagion has spread even to the Mohammedans; and we find its evolution proceeding on characteristically Hindu lines. In both communities, foreign descent forms the highest claim to social distinction; in both, promotion cometh from the West. As the twice-born Aryan is to the mass of Hindus, so is the Mohammedan of alleged Arab, Persian, Afghan, or Moghul origin to the rank and file of his co-religionists." There are social distinctions and class cleavages among the members of this faith, as among all peoples, but these are in no sense religious, as they are in Hinduism. Among the members of the Moslem faith there is equality of right; and every son of Islam, by his own industry and character, can enjoy that right. Surely this is no mean achievement.

Less worthy as a heritage of Moslem rule is the purdah system, which involves the seclusion of women, which has come in for very severe criticism. Its ill effects are numerous, and particularly so "among the poorer classes of Moslems, who appear to be more rigid on its observance than the corresponding class of Hindus. This effect is particularly noticeable in crowded urban areas, in which the space available to a woman in purdah and poor circumstances is so small as to seriously affect her health."

Islam, however, is now on the move; progress is the watchword from the minaret; schools and colleges have been established, notably the great university at Aligarh, while Hindus of the lower castes are being invited into the Moslem Brotherhood.

Even behind the curtain the women of the zenanas are not behindhand. We find a Parsee lady graduate of Oxford University writing in *The Times*: "These women of the shut door have a charm of their own—one does not want them to loose it. Since they cannot come out to take what awaits them, cannot we carry our gifts within? is what we

say. And this is what is being done. Take Bengal as an illustration. Here three purdah-nashins, studying in purdah, have lately taken Arts Degrees, and together with others of varying ability, led by a Moslem Begum, they have formed themselves into a group of social service workers to help illiterate purdahnashins in towns and villages. The value of this work cannot be put too high. It is literally reform from within—the best end from which to equalize the pace."

Many Moslem women have left the zenana and bravely taken their stand beside their husbands in the world. I have been the guest at dinner of a Moslem gentleman and his wife, and played golf at Bombay with a Mohammedan barrister and his consort.

Notwithstanding the deplorable local riots which still arise as the result of religious processions and observances—cow-killing by Mohammedans and the playing of Hindu bands in front of Moslem places of worship—efforts are being made by thoughtful men on both sides to bridge the deep gulf which has for centuries divided, and still divides, the religious and social structure of Hinduism from Islam.

CHAPTER VII

COLONISTS OF HINDUSTAN

"Children of men! the Unseen Power, whose eye
For ever doth accompany mankind,
Hath looked on no religion scornfully
That men did ever find."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

FOR countless centuries, Aryan, Greek, Macedonian, Scythian, Mongol, Iranian, Afghan and Moghul races have poured into India, but they have either disappeared or mingled with the races they found in the country and developed the numerous types of Indian resident to which I have referred in previous chapters.

Only three races have really colonized India, namely the Jews, the Zoroastrians, or Parsees, and an Arab community known as Moplahs.

Both Parsees and Jews have maintained their ancient faiths. Moreover, the Parsees and a section of the Jews have actually preserved their racial purity.

The Parsees are followers of Zoroaster, a man of extraordinary personality who flourished about eight hundred years before the Christian era. Like Buddha, tradition has gathered round his life incidents which recall the early days of Our Lord. Miraculous signs appeared at his birth and as a child he showed such immense wisdom that he was able to confront the Magi just as the child Christ, in the temple at Jerusalem, sat amongst the doctors who were astounded at his understanding, "both hearing them, and asking them questions."

Like other great teachers, Zoroaster spent many years in



[*Photo: Bremner*

A MOSLEM RULING PRINCESS: HER LAMENTED HIGHNESS THE BEGUM OF BHOPAL

[*Face page* 78



[Photo: Johnston and Hoffman

AN INDIAN RULER FROM THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER

Face page 79]

contemplation before he commenced teaching. The religion he founded was the national religion of Persia up to its conversion by Mohammed and his swordsmen. In the eighth century of our era, many of the faithful followers of Zoroaster fled from Persia and found a refuge on the West coast of India, first at Diu, then in Kathiawar, and later in Sanjan. Here they lived for some hundreds of years, treated with kindness and toleration under the protection of the ruler of Gujarat. They afterwards moved to Surat, and eventually established their headquarters at Bombay.

The religion which they brought with them is based on a dual conception of a good principle and an evil one which are in conflict and must remain so until the end of the world. Zoroaster is believed to have been gathered up into the highest heaven, to have been given the Word of Life by the deity and to have brought down with him the sacred fire which is kept burning in consecrated spots. Each man, according to Zoroaster, has a free will, a conscience and a soul, and, in addition, a guardian angel which is really his own character put into a spiritual body. Having the choice of good and evil, the doctrine teaches that there is a punishment for evil deeds after death. The soul has a romantic passage when it leaves its earthly framework on its way to eternity. For three days it hovers over its earthly abode, and during this period elaborate funeral rites are carried out. On the fourth day, the good spirit carries the soul towards heaven, demons barring the way. Between earth and heaven there is a bridge over which, after having done penance for its bad deeds, each soul has to pass. If fit for heaven, the soul crosses safely, but if not it falls into a gulf beneath to suffer for its sin. The fortunate spirits who cross the bridge pass into Everlasting Light.

Fire is a sacred emblem and is placed on the altars of the Parsee and attended by priests who chant hymns and burn incense before it. But Parsees do not, as is generally supposed, worship either the sun or fire.

"God, according to the Parsee faith, is the emblem of glory, refulgence, and light, and in this view a Parsee while engaged in prayer is directed to stand before the fire, or to direct his face towards the sun, as the most proper symbols of the Almighty."

The present Parsee form of worship has been tainted by Hindu practices, but of late years vigorous attempts have been made to restore its original purity.

The Parsees adopt a very curious means of disposing of their dead in what are called Towers of Silence. In a Parsee funeral, the bier is carried to the top of the Tower by "carriers of the dead," the mourners walking two by two in procession behind the bier. The bodies are exposed on a grating, and after an hour the flesh is so completely devoured by the vultures that inhabit the trees which surround the Towers that only the skeletons remain. These are left to bleach in the sun and wind till the bones are perfectly dry. The "carriers of the dead" then remove the bones from the grating and throw them into a well where they gradually crumble into dust.

This method of "burial" originates from the veneration the Parsees have for the elements. Fire is too much venerated to be polluted by burning the dead, water is almost equally respected, and so is earth itself; so this special mode has been devised. There is, however, another reason; Zoroaster taught that the rich and poor must meet in death, and this injunction has been literally interpreted and is carried out by means of the well in which the bones of all the Faithful become intermingled. The surroundings of the Tower are arranged to foster calm meditation, as they are laid out with beautiful gardens and fine trees, under which the mourners can meditate on the virtues of the departed. Although this method of disposing of the dead may appear revolting to Western minds, it has never been proved to be insanitary.

The Parsees have been foremost amongst Indians in adopting Western ideas, but have managed to preserve their

own manners, customs and dress. They are a handsome people, and have no professional beggars or prostitutes in their community. They are a refined race, and no Parsee indulges in expectoration, whilst their table manners are superior to those of many Europeans, as they have used finger bowls after their meals for thousands of years. They have been particularly enlightened in the matter of the education of women, and Parsee ladies have entered all the learned professions and attained much distinction in them. The Parsees show special commercial aptitude and are remarkably successful and most enterprising. Most Indian towns have prosperous general stores conducted by Parsees, and they have large business houses in the Presidency towns and in Burma. Benevolence is one of their greatest characteristics, and is by no means restricted to their own community. They have no military tastes nor have they taken any particular interest in the more active forms of sport such as polo, but they were the first section of the Indian community to take up cricket. In the early days of the war their patriotism was very pronounced, and until comparatively recently their devotion to the British supremacy in India was a leading characteristic of the community. Of late years, however, they have thrown in their lot with their Indian fellow-citizens and are taking a prominent part in the unrest which is so prevalent all over India.

At Colaba, near Bombay, there is a colony of Jews, known as Ben-i-Israel, which traces its origin to as far back as the sixth century. The community is large and well organised, and it may surprise the ordinary English person to realise that in Bombay out of every hundred persons whom one meets one may be either a Parsee, a Jain or a Jew. They are divided into two classes, white Jews and black Jews. The white Jews have maintained their Semitic blood quite pure and refuse to intermarry, eat or drink with their dusky co-religionists. They are chiefly husbandmen, oil-pressers, and soldiers; while some are schoolmasters, or employed in the medical

department. Their faults are intemperance and extravagance in costly feasts and ceremonies. But the majority of them are hard-working, own some land, and they have no beggars in their community.

It is difficult to fix the period when these colonists arrived in India. Dr. John Wilson believed that they were descendants of the Lost Tribes, because none of their names are later than the Captivity, and all their Scriptures are of an early date. It is now supposed that they came from Yemen in the sixth century of our era; their own traditions place their exodus in the second century, while other authorities fix it as late as the fifteenth.

Besides this Bombay community, there is a still more interesting colony in the little state of Cochin to the south of Madras. This colony maintains that it arrived in India shortly after the dispersion in the first century, but they may have been reinforced from time to time as they have preserved the fairness of their complexion in a marvellous way. There is a fine synagogue, and the children are taught "the Law" in pure Hebrew; not far off from this synagogue there is the synagogue of the black Jews, the descendants of Indians, given by the ancient kings to be the slaves of the white Jews! They have adopted the religion of their masters and carry out the ceremonial more or less in its original purity.

The White Jews are distinguished by a special dress, the men wearing a rich-coloured, long tunic, a waistcoat buttoned up to the neck, and full white trousers; they wear a skull-cap in daily life, and a turban when they go to a synagogue. The Black Jews dress more or less like the native Mohammedans around them.

The early Jewish colonists seem to have found great favour in the eyes of the Hindu Rulers of the State as Linschoten tells us that "The Jewes have built very fair stone houses, and are rich merchants, and of the King of Cochin neerest Counsellers; there they have their Synagogue with their hebrue Bible, and Moses Lawe, which I

have had in my hand; they are most white of colour, like men of Europa, and have many faire women. There are manie of them that came out of the country of Palestina and Jerusalem thether, and speake all over the Exchange good Spanish; they observe the Saboth, and other judicall ceremonies, and hope for the Messias to come."

Crooke thinks this old writer was correct in classing the Cochin Colony as Sephardim, or Spanish Jews, as very few of the Ashkenazim, or German Jews, were to be found in India.

In Bengal almost all the Jews are found in Calcutta, where, to quote Mr. O'Donnell, "they form a well-defined and well-organized community, under the leadership of men who are alike remarkable for their wealth, their liberality, and their capacity for business."

In Northern India a few small, scattered communities are found, many of whom keep "Europe" shops in British cantonments. The spread of these small communities is checked by the difficulty of finding a Rabbi to perform their services, and of securing a regular supply of Kosher meat. They live on good terms with members of other religions, but it is "a never-failing source of amusement to their Hindu and Moslem neighbours to watch a portly shopkeeper with his women-folk performing the Feast of Tabernacles under a rude shelter of boughs in his little garden."

In sharp contrast with these peace-loving communities is a race of warlike Moslems who occupy part of the Malabar coast. It is thought that this curious colony, imbedded in a Hindu country, and preserving the creed of Islam with fanatical enthusiasm, was founded by a body of Arab merchants who landed on the western coast of India in the third century after the Hegira, corresponding to the ninth century of our era.

They are a sturdy, intelligent and good-looking race. Their educational standard is low, but efforts are being made by the Madras Government to raise it. They are successful traders and agriculturists.

They wear beards and moustaches, and dress in a similar fashion to Mohammedans further north, and preserve Arabic words and phrases in their language.

The Moplah shows at times fanatical religious zeal, but until recent years agrarian disputes were usually at the bottom of their outbursts against authority.

Balfour says that "Hindu landlords kept the land in their own hands or leased it out to the Moplahs at high rents and then took advantage of legal rights to turn them out."

A regiment of the Indian Army was recruited among them, but the experiment proved a failure and the Moplah Rifles were disbanded in 1907.

In 1921 the Moplahs rose in rebellion with a view to establishing an independent Mohammedan kingdom in Malabar. They indulged in terrorist tactics and forcible religious conversion of whole Hindu communities.

They captured some rifles and shot-guns in the early days of the rebellion, but were generally armed with swords and spears.

For a time there was fierce fighting between the Government troops and the rebels, and peace was only restored after heavy fighting and numerous casualties on both sides.

The Moplahs have recently embarked on a new colonizing effort. A large number have gone to the Andaman Islands where they are living in exclusively Moplah villages, which are free from the bad habits and vices exhibited by former convict Settlers of these Islands.

CHAPTER VIII

SATAN, HIS ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS

"High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
To that bad eminence."

Paradise Lost.

IN every religion the presence of evil spirits has been recognized, and when the Aryans brought the Hindu system of worship to India, they found amongst the Dravidians and the aborigines thousands of deities who were little better than demons.

The great goddess Kali, the Terrible, was probably originally an aboriginal or tribal demon, who, from the hold she had on the people, was admitted into the Hindu pantheon and made an incarnation of the wife of Shiva.

The fact is that in the old days the lower classes, just as to-day, felt more at home with the minor deities than with the great gods, and were then—as now—chiefly dominated by the fear of demons and malign spirits. The Brahmans, recognizing this, did what they have always done; they said to the people: "We have not come to destroy your religion; we will take your demons and demonesses, marry them to our gods, and give them shrines and worship in our temples. Come with them and be a part of our religion. We will give to you the privileges, and confer upon you the dignity and blessing, of our great religion." The people were impressed by this offer, accepted

the situation, and were absorbed, with their religion, into the Brahmanical faith. From that forward they have been recognised as Hindus, and have, after a fashion, been loyal members of that faith.

But let it not be supposed that, by becoming Hindus, they have deserted their ancestral religion, and have ceased to be devil-worshippers. Far from it.

The attitude of mind of the lower Hindu cults is to regard the spirits of darkness as of far more importance than the spirits of light. The beneficent deities are considered as easy-going, and they may be trusted to continue in a course of helpfulness to man. Occasionally gratitude must be shown to them, or any cessation of their benefits must be renewed by some propitiation, but they may generally be ignored. The evil spirits, on the other hand, are not less active than powerful, and man must ever be on the watch to propitiate them.

Speaking of the aboriginal communities on the North Eastern Frontier, Mary Western says the tribes, though varying in their particular religious beliefs, are all alike bound hand and foot by fear of evil spirits, and by a complicated system of "taboo." The fortunate few who possess the knowledge of this system and know how to placate the spirits of evil, naturally make the most of their monopoly, and sickness or any serious trouble means impoverishment to the family concerned. They believe in a Creator, but they think that he has retired from all active work and is quite inaccessible to either prayers or threats, and as they believe that the few good spirits who exist are not interested in mankind, all their efforts are directed towards propitiating the thousands of evil ones.

It is a matter of history that as each religion developed, the beneficent powers of the god or goddess tended to gain the upper hand and his, or her, evil attributes to decline.

As their influence diminished the demons received less attention and worshippers devoted their attention to more kindly spirits.

Demons may be divided into two classes, but in primitive communities the characteristics of any division of evil spirits is inclined to merge one into the other.

The first type of demon consists of what are really ghosts. They are disembodied human beings who after death revisit their old homes or haunts and have powers for good or evil over their living successors. The second class are the real demons. They have never lived in human form and have definite spheres of evil. They cause smallpox, cholera, and all the ills which flesh is heir to, and glory in tormenting mere mortals.

There is hardly a period of the primitive Indian peasant's life when demons do not haunt him which have to be conciliated and propitiated. Some are lewd and lascivious monsters, who by the violence and persistence of their embraces so tire out the women whom they visit at night under the form of a dog, a tiger, or some other animal, that the unfortunate creatures die of sheer lassitude and exhaustion.

This belief existed in the early Christian Church when it was believed that the ruler of hell helped young girls against their will to enjoy the delights of motherhood. However, these delights were said to be of a peculiar kind, in that intercourse with the devil was bound always to be followed by the birth of the most frightful monsters. The devil then unloaded these most remarkable monsters into respectable people's houses. Even Luther was not able to free himself from this most astonishing delusion. On the contrary, he was devoted to it with such conviction that, when once in Dessau, he heard of a monster (according to medical opinion, it was really a rachitic child!) that had grown to be twelve years of age, he advised, in all seriousness, "that this sinful product of devilish intercourse be thrown into the river Mulde."

Good spirits in constant conflict with evil spirits is a leading feature of the Zoroastrian teaching, but it was the Jews who first formulated the doctrine of Satan, the Prince

of Darkness, in perpetual warfare with Jehovah, the one supreme God. Satan was once an angel, but with many others he has fallen from heaven and leads the hosts of fallen angels against the Legions of Light. Still he remains, curiously enough, under the orders of Jehovah, and before tempting Job, Satan appeared among the sons of God to obtain Jehovah's permission. (Job ii.)

The Gospels distinctly recognize the belief that disease was the result of "possession" by demons, and the early Church carried on Christ's method of expelling them.

Indeed, early Christianity accepted pagan demonology unchanged and most Christian communities owned an exorcist, or official caster-out of demons. It seems that this profession of exorcists formed a clerical order of its own; "for, as all pagans, according to the Christian conception, were in the power of evil spirits, these demons were to be thoroughly driven out before each baptism, and thus the institution of a special church officer, whose duty it was to drive out demons, became absolutely necessary, especially after exorcism had also been introduced, during the fourth century, in the baptism of children. It may be stated, incidentally, that Catholic clergy of the third minor order are even to-day called 'exorcists'."

The common opinion of the early Christian Church was that the gods of all heathen nations were evil spirits who had usurped the place of God, an idea which found its greatest expression in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In northern lands the demons were further discredited by being made ridiculous. The Satan of the miracle plays was a fool whom everyone might outwit, the ancestor of the Elizabethan clown. The most elaborate system of "Devil" is the Mohammedan, which is largely derived from that of the popular Judaism shown in the apocalyptic books.

In the Biblical account of the Fall of Man the Spirit of Evil takes the form of a serpent, and as the serpent is used so constantly by old writers as the personification—if one

may use the term—of the Prince of Darkness, we may refer here appropriately to the reptile as an object of worship.

The veneration of the snake is one of the oldest forms of religion. There are still many thousand votaries of the cult; indeed it is one of the popular religions of Northern India. Frazer tells us that "in the Punjab once a year in the month of September the snake is worshipped by all castes and religions for nine days only." At the end of August the Mirasans, especially those of the Snake tribe, make a snake of dough which they paint black and red, and place on a winnowing basket. This basket they carry round the village, and on entering any house they say: "God be with you all! May every ill be far! May our patron's (Gugga's) word thrive!" Then they present the basket with the snake, saying: "A small cake of flour: a little bit of butter: if you obey the snake, you and yours shall thrive!" Strictly speaking, a cake and butter should be given, but it is seldom done. Everyone, however, gives something, generally a handful of dough or some corn. In a house where there is a new bride or whence a bride has gone, or where a son has been born, it is usual to give a rupee and a quarter, or some cloth. Sometimes the bearers of the snake also sing: "*Give the snake a piece of cloth, and he will send a lively bride!*"

When every house has been thus visited, the dough snake is buried and a small grave is erected over it. Thither during the first nine days of September the women come to worship. They bring a basin of curds, a small portion of which they offer at the snake's grave, kneeling on the ground and touching the earth with their foreheads. Then they go home and divide the rest of the curds among the children. Here the dough snake is clearly a substitute for a real snake. Indeed, in districts where snakes abound the worship is offered, not at the grave of the dough snake, but in the jungles where snakes are known to be. Besides this yearly worship, performed by all the people, the

members of the Snake tribe worship in the same way every morning after a new moon. The Snake tribe is not uncommon in the Punjab. Members of it will not kill a snake, and they say that its bite does not hurt them. If they find a dead snake, they put clothes on it and give it a regular funeral."

There are many tribes or clans in various parts of the world who claim association with, or descent from, snakes or snake gods.

The Nagara-Panchami is one of the great Hindu Festivals. It is celebrated in the beginning of February in honour of snakes, and especially of the most venomous species, such as the cobra, called *naga* or *nagara* by the Hindus. This reptile, which is very common and the most dangerous of all, is honoured in a very special manner on this occasion. The people pay visits to the holes where snakes of this sort are generally known to remain concealed, and make offerings to them of milk, and fruit.

Hindus have been known to keep deadly snakes for years in their houses, feeding and petting them. Even if a whole family were in danger of losing their lives, no one member of it would be bold enough to lay sacrilegious hands on such an honoured inmate.

"Temples have also been erected in their special honour. There is a particularly famous one in Eastern Mysore, at a place called Subramaniah, which is also the name of the great snake so often mentioned in Hindu fables. Every year in the month of December a solemn feast is held in this temple. Innumerable devotees flock to the sacred spot from all parts, to worship and offer sacrifices to the snakes. An enormous number of the reptiles have taken up their abode inside the building, where they are fed and looked after by the officiating Brahmans. The special protection thus afforded has allowed them to increase to such an extent that they may be met with at every turn all over the neighbourhood. Many of their worshippers take the trouble to bring them food. And woe to him who should

have the audacity to kill one of these gruesome deities. He would get himself into terrible trouble."

The long life of the serpent and the fact that it changes its skin, have suggested ideas of immortality and resurrection in these ancient "faiths."

It is a curious thing that a reptile which is not really remarkable for its intelligence, should have become so famed for its wisdom. Christ himself made it a symbol of worldly wisdom, and when sending forth his disciples to work miracles, our Lord said: "Be ye . . .wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Matthew x. 16.)

The association of the serpent with the healing art is spread throughout the world. There was an old Greek legend which declared that snakes knew of a root which brought the dead to life!

Indeed it was popularly believed, throughout the classic world, that eating some part of a serpent gave medical skill to the consumer of the unsavoury dish.

The superstition that touching a serpent's skin has healing powers exists in some places, and this idea underlies the raising up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness which cured the Israelites of snakebite.

In nearly all the ancient serpent cults the reptile is regarded as a beneficent deity and not as a demon, so that it is curious that he plays the part of Satan in Genesis and throughout the Judaic system.

Notwithstanding this fact, something akin to snake worship has actually invaded the Christian Calendar of Saints. There is a shrine to St. Domenico of Foligno, at Coccelo, in the Abruzzi mountains of Southern Italy. This shrine is famous for its cures, and on the Saint's Day in May each year men carry live serpents before the image of the Saint, which is festooned with snakes.

The use of the serpent as a medical badge in modern times is due to the association of the reptile with the Greek God of Medicine called Aesculapius by the Romans and Asklepios by the Greeks. He was the son of the great god

Apollo by the nymph Coronis. His skill became so famous that Zeus was afraid he might make men immortal and slew him with a thunderbolt.

Homer mentions Aesculapius and states that his two sons, Machaon and Podalirius, were military physicians with the Greek Army in the siege of Troy.

The cult of Aesculapius was introduced into Rome to avert a pestilence. The god was fetched from his most famous shrine at Epidaurus, in Southern Greece, in the form of a snake, and located in a temple on an island in the Tiber. His ancient statues show Aesculapius as a tall man with a bare breast and wearing a cloak.

The god is always shown bearing a clublike staff with a serpent coiled round it. This club, or wand of Aesculapius, entwined with a serpent, has been adopted as the universal badge of the medical services of armies.

In the Hill districts of the Punjab, if in ploughing a snake is killed by the plough, work must be discontinued until the plough is purified. The entry of a snake into the upper storey of a house is considered to portend evil, and it must be driven out by pulling down the roof, a somewhat serious penalty for the visitation.

To revert to the development of the early notions of Satan and his association with the serpent, the Jews seem to have borrowed the idea of a great Demon ruling over a kingdom of evil from the Persians.

In the apocryphal books Satan is definitely identified with the Serpent which tempted Eve, and the *Book of the Secret of Enoch* gives a detailed account of the revolt of Satan and his fall from Heaven.

Christ in his teaching seems to have adopted the Jewish idea of a great Prince of Darkness ruling over a kingdom of evil spirits whom it was his divine mission to overcome.

In the early Christian Church this conception was universally accepted, and as Harnack points out in his *History of Dogma*, "the present dominion of evil demons was just as generally pre-supposed as man's need of redemption,

which was regarded as a result of that dominion." The early Christian Fathers held that Satan had dominion over this present world, though Christ had freed his servants from the Satanic power. Irenaeus in the second century represented this freedom as being gained through Christ's payment of an actual ransom to Satan, and this idea gained ground, though it was definitely repudiated by Anselm and other saints. "Present liberal Christian thought is inclined to neglect all consideration of the Devil, and to consider belief in Satan as an unessential part of the Christian faith."

In South India the powers of darkness are an ever-present reality to the popular imagination, and every village has its local "deity" who is really a demon.

In Canara, these spirits of evil haunt graveyards, and in some places they may become incarnate at any moment in the most disconcerting way in the form of a white dog!

Some of these demons are anonymous, but many, through association with some particular form of evil, have acquired a personality and a name, such as Ankamma, the author of cholera, and Mariamma, who causes smallpox.

These South Indian demons recall some of the Christian Saints who had a decided predilection for medical specialities, and for that reason paid a particular attention to certain varieties of disease. Thus, St. Anna espoused opthamology; St. Jude cured coughs; St. Valentine, epilepsy; and St. Catherine of Siena, the plague.

The Southern Indians agree with Kipling, and know that

"When Nag the basking cobra hears the careless foot of man,
He will sometimes wriggle sideways and avoid it if he can;
But his mate makes no such motion where she camps beside the trail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male."

Therefore their divinities are all feminine!

These local deities have little or no association with the orthodox Hindu pantheon, but as might be expected, the

blood-thirsty wife of Shiva has a prototype amongst these evil spirits under the name of Kaliamma.

The number of these village "goddesses" is legion, and a divine—or rather demoniacal—origin is given even to bronchial catarrh, as there is actually a demoness, Kokkalamma, who causes coughs!

There is another called Angalamma who has the disgusting practice of eating bones, and thousands of others with similar horrid habits.

These village goddesses, in accordance with Indian custom, have their consorts, but—like those of earthly queens—these consorts merely exist in the shadow of their sovereigns.

In Canara the attendant of the deity is a live buffalo, and when he dies his successor is appointed immediately.

Only one of these "mere males" has succeeded in securing a name and an individuality, namely, Lyenar, the guardian of the Tamil villages, who differs as much in character as in sex from the cantankerous ruck of divine femininity. He alone is masculine, and he alone is always benevolent. Night by night he rides round his village scaring away thieves and devils and all other nocturnal terrors. To aid him in his kindly task on the best principles of sympathetic magic, his shrine—he is the only male who is honoured with one—is filled with clay images of horses.

It must be understood that the worship of these village demons—or deities—is quite foreign to the genius of Hinduism. Indeed the priests of the Hindus will have naught to do with them.

The village goddess, being a native of the land long before the coming of the Brahmans, is still served by a priesthood sprung from the original inhabitants, and as the most original inhabitants are usually those who have been most depressed by later intruders, her priests, more often than not, come from those very classes which for every social purpose are regarded as the most degraded and most untouchable.

The village priesthood is recruited from the lowest castes.

"At the great buffalo sacrifice which is the Dravidian Day of Atonement," says Gledstone, "the chief sacrificer must come from among the leather workers, who are, if anything, the lowest of all outcastes. Frequently in any particular place some members of a particular family must take the chief share in the local sacrifices. In the Telugu and Canarese countries, certain families among the outcaste weavers have an hereditary right to assist at the sacrifice and sing the hymns. Among the Telugu outcastes there are families who bear the surname Dasari, that is "minister," thus revealing that their ancestors were the hereditary house of Aaron among their people."

The main item in the worship of these village ghouls is animal sacrifice, which Bishop Whitehead describes as "crude butchery and coarse bloodshed . . . simply the desire to appease the ill-temper of a vengeful spirit with the offering of blood."

The sacrificial offerings consist of fowl, sheep and goats, and there is an elaborate ritual preparatory to the actual offering of the victim to the deity. There is, for instance, the taking of omens.

Water is often poured over the animal's back—if it shivers the sacrifice is acceptable.

The climax of the festival is the sacrifice of the victim. Whether fowl or sheep or buffalo, the officiant should if possible strike off its head with one blow—his assistants will, when necessary, stretch out its neck to facilitate the stroke. The head falls, the body staggers a few steps and falls, already another beast's head is falling: there is much blood and much rejoicing. The essence, and so sometimes even the actual blood, of the sacrifice is believed to be eaten by the deity, the actual flesh is often the perquisite of the outcastes. In the Tamil country the priest occasionally drinks the blood as the god's deputy. In some places part of the blood is applied by the priest to the doorposts of the temple and the foreheads of the worshippers. Rice soaked in blood (and so, one may assume, impregnated

with the power of the goddess) is often scattered on the houses or over the fields. In which case great care must be taken lest the precious talisman and its fertilising benefits be stolen by the inhabitants of some other village. Conversely, when the worship is over the image of the goddess may be thrown into the territory of some neighbouring village in the hope that thereby she may transfer her troublesome attentions elsewhere.

The customs I have described are not confined to the South of India. In the Simla Hills possession by ghosts is believed in by all the peasants. Spirits are under the control of low caste persons, such as cobblers, shepherds, and ironsmiths, as well as Brahmans. If a person suffers from disease and does not recover with domestic medicines, a holy man is called in and asked to diagnose the disease. He throws dice or goes into a trance and makes a diagnosis of the kind of ghost, if any, with which the man is possessed. Almost any ordinary sympton of sickness is regarded as a sign of demoniacal possession.

The person possessed by a ghost is made to inhale the smoke of burning wheat, chillies, tiger's flesh or pork. If the ghost is not dispelled by these means, the Brahman makes a cake, recites hymns and places a little model *dooley*, or palanquin, before the patient, and puts the offerings of fruit and flowers into it. The patient is directed to worship the palanquin, after which it is placed at a cross-road!

Another method of exorcising the ghost is to prepare a cake from seven kinds of grain. Five or six little native lamps are then lighted and placed upon the cake, and in front of the cake are arranged five, or seven, or eleven small stones. A hymn is chanted, and then the patient selects a stone and places it upon the cake. The cake and a chicken are then taken to the cremation-ground where the Brahman sacrifices the chicken and commits the stone to the flames.

Ghosts who have in the Hills the name *banshirâs*, which recalls the Irish *banshee*, are propitiated in some places by

sacrifices of goats, pigs or fowl, but such offerings must always be supplemented by giving alms to the Brahmans to induce them to sing propitiatory hymns.

A common practice is to replace ordinary sacrifices by consecrating a piece of forest to the worship of a god or spirit. No tree in this sacred area may be cut, or its leaves or boughs broken.

The Kanets are convinced that "spirits" are everywhere seeking anxiously to enter the bodies of mortals. If a Hill man, or woman, yawns all their companions frighten away the "spirits" which hover round by striking their fingers' ends, otherwise one of them might enter the person's body through the open mouth!

Not only are living beings amenable to the influence of evil spirits, but inanimate objects, especially weapons, such as guns and pistols, are subject to their malign powers. Firearms are often to be seen bound with charms written on pieces of paper and wrapped in rags which are designed to keep away the powers of evil spirits who might lessen their usefulness.

Both the ancestors and descendants of Satan are mighty powers in India.

CHAPTER IX

MAGIC, MIRACLES, AND THE STARS

"The point of view from which man has regarded nature for thousands of years up to modern times has been such as to promote most effectually the development of superstition; for the idea that a satisfactory insight into the character of natural phenomena can be obtained only by means of adequate experiments, and of observation perfected by the employment of the inductive reasoning and ingenious instruments, is comparatively recent."

HUGO MAGNUS.

"the sway
Of magic potent of sun and star."

WORDSWORTH.

IF, in every part of Europe, there are people whose actions are influenced by all sorts of superstitions, it is hardly surprising that a country like India, in which the vast bulk of the population is illiterate, should preserve the respect for magic and magicians which was universal in our own country not so very long ago.

Nothing happens by chance or from natural causes; everything is influenced in some way or other by sorcery and witchcraft. Disease, disappointment and death itself are attributed to the occult influence of some magician hired by an enemy.

It should be remembered that magicians and soothsayers had a great reputation amongst the Children of Israel, who were warned in the Mosaic Law against consulting them. Saul himself, who tried to enforce this Law, was weak enough to have recourse to the enchantments of the Witch of Endor.

Moreover, the miracles of Our Lord have been regarded as the most cogent proof of the truth of Christianity, and there are many theologians who still contend that the miracles stand on firm historical ground and form one of the best accredited parts of Christian teaching. Dr. Figgis, in the present day, says: "Miracles are but the expression of God's freedom; the truth that He is above and not merely within the order of nature. Disbelief in them really leads on to pantheism. Displaying this truth of God's liberty and personality, they arouse no deeper speculative difficulties than does the common daily fact of human free-will—perhaps even less. . . . If we have once surmounted the cardinal crux of human freedom, there is no real ground for boggling over miracles."

In most parts of India, the priest—as such—has nothing to do with magic, but he lives on good terms with the magicians. The man who, instead of worshipping the gods, gives himself over to the worship of evil spirits, is regarded as a magician. When he visits a homestead, it is always assumed that he is there on purpose to call up spirits, reveal some secret, or cause either good or evil to happen to the inmates. The Indian magicians rarely require the presence of the person against whom they are operating, and they can perform charms on an individual through any of his other possessions, but are especially efficient through hair and nails taken from his body. To ward against such dangers, special care is taken that nails and hair are destroyed as soon as they are cut.

As will be seen later, Hindus are often named after Springs and trees, and this fact is utilized by the magicians. A favourite spell is to boil some water taken from a spring having the same name as his victim, thereby causing him to get into "hot water" in the figurative sense. Another way of injuring an enemy is for the magician to drive a nail into a tree which bears his name and thus cause him to incur some physical injury. Another dodge for injuring an enemy is to get a magician to put an image or something

representing him into a sacrificial fire which causes him to suffer from intense heat.

The magicians adopt various modes of procedure in the treatment of the sick: they either attempt, as do our Western quacks, to create the impression, by administering medicine, that they are actually able to direct the treatment of the ailing in a rational manner, or they restrict themselves to different kinds of magical observances.

The drug therapy of the magicians embraces everything under the sun as a remedy. The more out-of-the-way and the less suitable for a remedy a substance seems to be, the more likely it is to be chosen by the magician, for it is always the main object of these gentry to make their treatment as sensational as possible. In this they succeed best by employing the most extraordinary substances as remedies. Thus they make use of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, just because these, owing to their value, are held in great esteem, and their medical application, therefore, is bound to create a sensation. The most loathsome substances are also employed with the same conception.

Few peasants can fail to be impressed by the employment of human faeces, urine, and menstrual blood in causing spectacular cures, whilst the awe inspired by the skeletons of men and animals is relied upon by the magicians to exploit their remedies. For this reason, charlatans love to administer powders of bones, sometimes alleged to be human, to their patients, often with remarkable results.

In some cults the priest is also a magician and is armed with a multitude of spells, incantations, magical figures, and the like. He claims, to use the words of Sir M. Monier-Williams: "to prognosticate futurity, work the most startling prodigies, infuse breath into dead bodies, kill or humiliate enemies, afflict anyone anywhere with disease or madness, inspire anyone with love, charm weapons and give them unerring efficacy, enchant armour and make it impenetrable, turn milk into wine, plants into meat, or invert all such processes at will. He is even superior to the

gods, and can make gods, goddesses, imps and demons, carry out his most trifling behests."

The belief in the Evil Eye is a widespread superstition accepted by the medieval Fathers of the Christian Church, and it flourishes among ignorant and superstitious races, even among the English and Irish peasantry of our own day. Nowhere, however, does it thrive more vigorously than in India. Here the belief slides easily into those connected with witchcraft and demoniacal influence, which are all so closely linked that it is difficult to disentangle them.

In order to neutralise this "Evil Eye" the people keep well away out of the sight of a suspected person, and use many charms. Dust thrown over an animal releases it from any bad effects, and crops are protected by means of a long post fixed in the field with a bone or skin of some animal attached to it. This latter, as I have pointed out elsewhere, incidentally acts as a scare-crow.

Mr. Crooke says the dread of the Evil Eye is responsible for some of the squalor of the Eastern bazaar. "When you build a house," he writes, "it is unwise to finish it; it is safer to leave a beam projecting from a wall, or part of the front unplastered, that the malignant passer-by may find occasion for amused contempt, rather than for unstinted praise of the owner. Again, building is an act of virtue, and the heir can win no merit by completing his father's design; he prefers to leave the old dwelling incomplete and build a new one elsewhere. The superstition in the same way affects native art by insisting on irregularity of pattern and an occasional error in the outlines." It has even been shown that many or indeed most of the Eastern art patterns represent devices to repel the "Evil Eye."

The sale of love philtres is probably as profitable to-day in India as it was in the Middle Ages in Europe. It is said that one of the most approved prescriptions in Bengal directs "that a portion of the frontal bone of a dead man, the fruit of the narcotic Dhatura, or thorn-apple, be mixed together in their proper proportions. If a man's fore-

head be rubbed with this preparation, he can bring under his control any one whom he fears or loves."

It is not by entering into contact with the demons, to which I have referred in the previous chapter, that the Indian magician acquires his great powers; he, on the contrary, allies himself with the Hindu Trinity, and Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva themselves are subject to his commands. In olden times there were probably sacrifices made to the gods, but the magician nowadays relies mostly on "mantras," or magic formulae, which have such an immense influence over all the gods that they are compelled to carry out his behests on earth or in heaven if the magician dins into their ears the mighty formula sufficiently frequently.

The profession of a magician is not altogether devoid of danger as if he fails to "deliver the goods" he is very apt to get into trouble.

The profession of magic has taken such hold over the people that there is actually a caste of wizards.

Apart from their own direct influence, the magicians operate through the sale of amulets or talismans. These usually consist of glass beads made magical by means of "mantras"—that is special prayers—and various roots and pieces of metal engraved with strange designs or words.

After all, these amulets are not very different from the rheumatic rings and various kinds of belts which are worn by English men and women to-day.

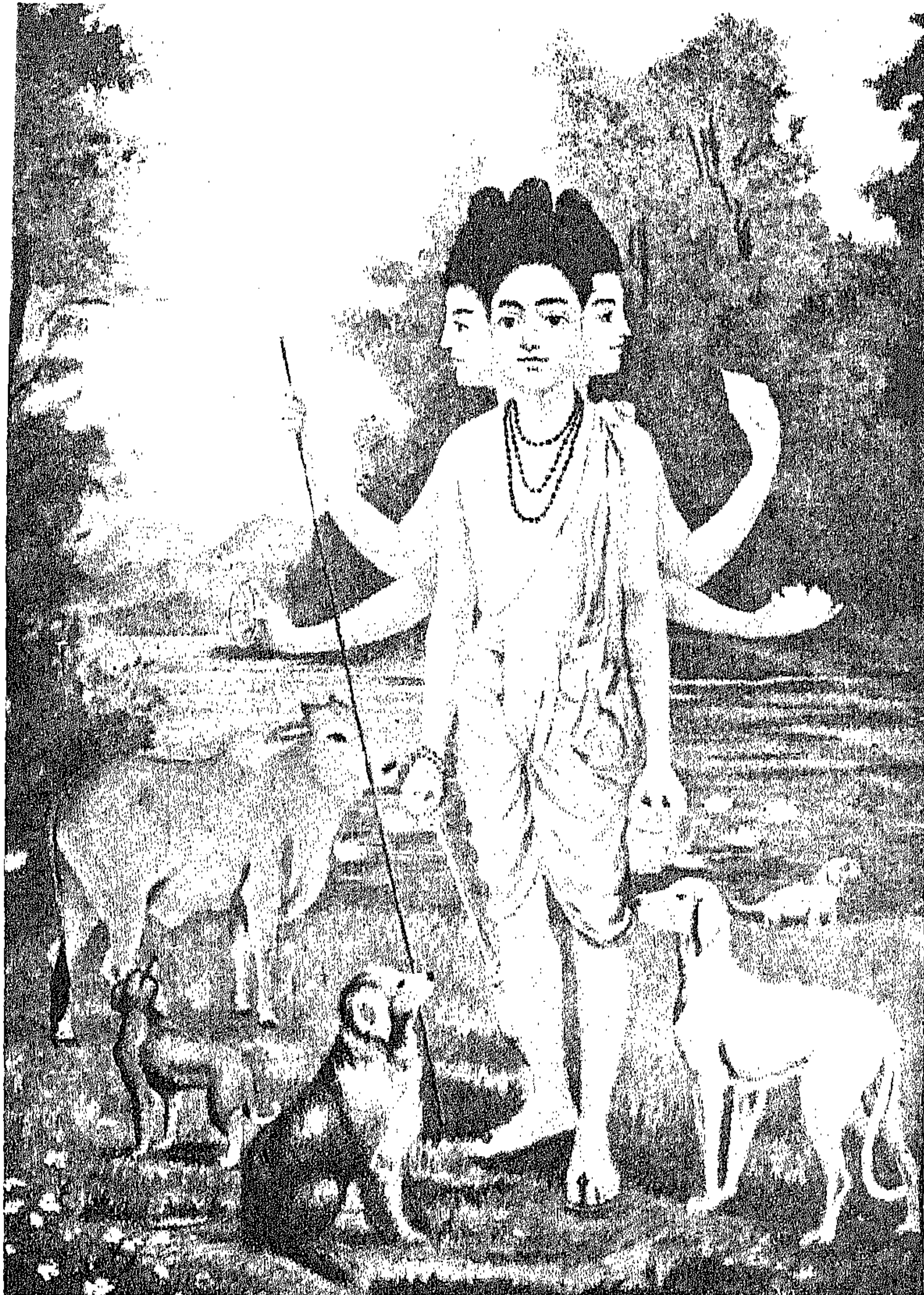
The professors of magic do a good trade in secret remedies which revive impaired virility; indeed, owing to the debauched youth of so many natives of Hindustan, the sale of such remedies is extremely profitable, and is not beneath the consideration of quite reputable pharmaceutical houses.

It is all very well to scoff at the firm belief of the Indian peasant in the powers of certain people to produce supernatural effects by means beyond their comprehension, but their credulity is deeply seated in the psychology of the human race, and the patronage accorded by fashionable, if neurotic, London ladies to Bond Street palmists and



VISHNU WITH HIS WIFE AND FAITHFUL SERPENT, SHESHA

[*Face page* 102



DATTATRAYA, THE JOINT INCARNATION OF BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA
The four dogs represent the four Vedas

Face page 103]

spiritualists shows that even in this most advanced stage of civilisation, many people will, in certain circumstances, seek solace in pretended magic, and it may be admitted, notwithstanding many palpably exposed frauds, that there are undoubtedly well-authenticated phenomena which do require explanation. This fact is supported by the writings of such able scientists as Sir Oliver Lodge and Lombroso. The Indian juggler has attained a very high degree of mechanical skill, and there is no doubt that sleight of hand plays a part in the stock-in-trade of the Indian magician.

The belief in magic is not confined to the Hindu population, as it is shared by the Mohammedans, who are just as credulous as their Hindu brethren. The Pathan tonga driver of the Frontier who is a very devout Mussulman indeed, will not dream of driving a pony which has not round its neck a circlet of beads to keep off the Evil Eye. If, by any chance, this necklace is lost or if the string breaks and some of the beads cannot be found, the son of the Prophet is a very unhappy man indeed for many days to come, and if he should be visited by sickness or the pony should meet with an accident, nothing will convince him that this has not come about by the Evil Eye.

Closely allied to their devotion to magic and miracles is the firm belief in the influence of the stars on human life and destiny, which is accepted by even most highly-educated Indians. This is a survival of the firm conviction of our own forefathers that the astrologer was almost omniscient. They believed that he could foretell the destiny of an individual by calculating which star was in the ascendant at his time of birth, and that he could derive limitless information from the signs of the zodiac with regard to the character, physique and destiny of every human being.

Indeed, astrology is the oldest of the sciences, and when all learning died in the Dark Ages, it was, curiously enough, the only branch of learning which survived, kept alive by the sworn foes of all the arts, the Saracens. This perhaps

because "there was in astrology something supernatural and magical, like the Djinns and Afrits of their own Arabian Nights." "For a thousand years darkness reigned, till in the fifteenth century came the Renaissance, the revival of learning. The ancient science of astrology rose to a blaze of glory, of which some smouldering gleams may still be seen in some dark crannies. While it still shone brightly it was intimately connected with the art of medicine. . . ."

In those stories of Kipling's in which Puck, the last of the English fairies, reveals to two children the old inhabitants of our country, in their form and habit as they lived, we are introduced to a great physician, Dr. Nicholas Culpeper. Wounded in some skirmish in the Civil wars he started for his house in Spitalfields. But passing through a Sussex village he found the people sore afflicted with the Plague, and being a true physician stayed to do what he could. Unfortunately, in spite of all his knowledge and his skill, he made no headway against the disease. One night, jaded by a hard day's work, and by failure to understand the nature of the pestilence, he sat in the moonlight in the garret of a house where all the folks had died. As he sat, out of some corner, there crept into the centre of the room a rat, and in the very moonbeams, it died. To the ordinary man there was nothing strange in this, but to the man of science it was remarkable. The rat, being a nocturnal animal, was under the protection of Our Lady, the moon. If it died in her very light, something more powerful must have been fighting against her influence. When another rat crept out to die in the moonlight all was made clear.

Going out into the open, the doctor saw Mars just about his setting, and as he disappeared a ray of light seemed to flash from him, as if he were dealing a last blow with his sword at his ancient enemy, the Moon. Mars it was who had slain the rats and had warned the physician to do his part. So Dr. Culpeper engaged the villagers in a great hunt, and partly by rousing them from their lethargy, partly by

exercise and open air, partly by burning accidentally some infected cottages, he stayed the Plague and saved their lives.

All this seems sheer nonsense to us, but in the seventeenth century such things were believed, and right up to Stuart times remedies were selected by physicians from supposed astrological associations.

The Indian astrologer assigns the days of the week to different planets and each planet is supposed to exercise its influence during the space of a year. Some planets such as the Moon, Mercury, Jupiter and Venus, have a kindly influence, under their sway everything thrives, and men live happily with abundant crops and fruitful fields. The Sun, Mars and Saturn, on the other hand, are evilly disposed towards mankind; they send down sickness, cause troubles and disappointments, and by holding off the rain produce poor yields from the crops and sometimes famine.

In relation to rain, the old Hindu astrologers believed that there were four principal clouds which yielded rain and others which produced storms and hurricanes. The frequency of rain depended to a very large extent on the good or bad will of certain elephants whose duty it was to carry water up to the clouds; four of the elephants were said to have discharged their duty in an exemplary way whilst others were very neglectful, with disastrous results to the crops.

The Hindu astrologers are not only believed to be capable of telling the secrets of the future, but to be of practical use in everyday life as when an article is stolen they profess to be able to disclose not only where it has been hidden but the sex and caste of the thief. They claim to be able to tell whether a person, who had been long absent, is dead or alive, sick or well, and also whether or not he will return.

In rural India to-day, the seven days of the week are split up into four lucky days and three unlucky ones, which are curiously enough Sunday, Tuesday and Saturday. On these days no old-fashioned Hindu will start any important undertaking or set out on a journey.

Astrology is dying hard. Even to-day a journal of the science "based on scientific principles" is published, and in every Indian newspaper a Pundit or a Professor invites interested readers to obtain a free Astrological study of their lives, prepared according to his original and unique method. "Whatever your present opinions of Astrology may be—whether you are favourably inclined, definitely sceptical, or of an open mind—he invites YOU to test his system, and join the legion of satisfied clients whose praise has won for him the reputation of being one of the greatest living exponents of the science."

After all, there is nothing very remarkable in these Indian beliefs, for in Europe people still believe that the moon has an influence on the weather. We still speak of a person being born "under a lucky star." We still say that a man's disposition is Mercurial or Martial, Jovial or Saturnine. Things are said to be "in conjunction" or "in opposition," "disastrous" or "exorbitant," all astrological terms. And doctors, even to-day, and even if they do not always know it, prefix their prescriptions with the sign of the planet Jupiter!

CHAPTER X

WANDERING FRIARS AND HOUSEHOLD PRAYERS

"Beaker or flagon, or bowl or jar,
Clumsy or slender, coarse or fine;
However the potter may make or mar,
All were made to contain the wine:
Should we this one seek or that one shun
When the wine which gives them their worth is one?"

WHEN Christ gave the injunction to His disciples: "Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves," He formulated a doctrine ringing strange to Western ears, but which was a mere aphorism of everyday life to an Eastern people. It was the doctrine of asceticism which Jesus preached, which amongst the Jews was confined to special classes of the prophets and to times of special distress and urgency.

Hermitism had appeared amongst the Essenes in Palestine and in Egypt shortly before the Advent of Our Lord, but had been established amongst the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains for many centuries.

The early Christians practised celibacy, poverty, fasting, wearing of sackcloth and night vigils, which eventually crystallised into monasticism, the most highly organised form of asceticism.

The life of a man, according to the ancient Hindu rule, is divided into four stages. He must first be an unmarried religious student, then he should fulfil his duties as husband and father, after which he is free to retire from active work, and devote himself to pious exercises as an anchorite. If

he succeeds in snapping the last links of attachment to the things of this earth, he enters the fourth stage and wanders forth in rags and poverty as a religious mendicant, to beg his food from door to door.

All down the ages India has found in the ascetic its ideal of a man of piety. The ascetic may be defined as one who has denied himself every pleasure the world can bring, all its amusements and enjoyments; one who has given up human passions and every joy of human society to the extent that he brings himself to the renunciation of everything worldly and spends his life in rigid self-denial.

The following passage from the *Bhagavad Gita* gives an idea of the exaltation and remoteness of the devotee's life: "The devotee whose self is contented with knowledge and experience, who is unmoved, who has restrained his senses, and to whom a sod, a stone, and gold are alike, is said to be devoted. A devotee should constantly devote himself to abstraction, remaining in a secret place, alone with his mind and self-restrained, without expectations and without belongings. Fixing his seat firmly in a clean place, not too high nor too low, and covered over with a sheet of cloth, a deerskin, and kusa grass—and there seated on that seat, fixing his mind exclusively on one point with the working of the mind and sense restrained, he should practise devotion for the purity of self. Thus constantly devoting himself to abstraction, a devotee whose mind is restrained attains that tranquillity which culminates in final emancipation and assimilation with God."

Following this path of abstraction and asceticism, the soul is led to the supreme bliss of assimilation with the Divine. This method of life has so appealed to the Indian mind throughout the centuries that it has become elaborated to an amazing degree and reduced to a system of philosophy.

The final aim of Hindu asceticism is by repressing earthly desires and bringing the soul to a state of utter tranquillity, to deter all action of the powers and senses which may delay final absorption in the deity.

The spirit of Hinduism has made the path of abstraction and the elimination of every thought, emotion and ambition, its goal. In other words, man, by self-repression and the effacement of every faculty of mind and body, is to attain unto final emancipation, the Hindu equivalent of Heaven.

This attitude of mind has a profound effect on the material problems of India and forms a psychological cause for the present state of the Indian masses. The Government publication, *India in 1930–31*, says: "Generally speaking it would be true to say that the whole structure of traditional Indian society tends to discourage both the habit of mind and the method of life upon which the successful pursuit of economic prosperity depends, by implying that the production and accumulation of wealth is not one of the necessary functions of mankind. It is of course true that the concentration upon purely material standards of value, which is at present so characteristic of the Western peoples, causes profound uneasiness to the best intelligences among them; and on philosophical grounds it might be legitimate to urge that the powerful religious sentiment which causes large numbers of Indians to regard their lives as unimportant items in the great fabric of past and future, whose only justification lies in the means they provide for advance towards spiritual perfection, embodies something altogether nobler than the popular ideals of the West. But obviously this attitude is a grave handicap to the country's economic advancement."

The consequences of this fundamentally uneconomic bias of Indian psychology are manifested in a variety of ways. Throughout the country manual labour still frequently implies a loss of dignity, and whole castes are thereby debarred from productive activities. The number of religious mendicants who subsist upon the charity of the poor is so great as to impose a burden which many countries more wealthy than India would not dream of sustaining.

The answer to this statement is given by the King George V. Professor of Philosophy in Calcutta University. He says:

"The aim of the saññyāsin is not to free himself from the cares of outward life, but to attain a state of spiritual freedom when he is not tempted by riches or honour; and is not elated by success or depressed by failure. He develops a spirit of equanimity and so "bears patiently improper words and does not insult anyone; he does not hate anyone for the sake of his physical body." These free men are solitary souls who have not any personal attachments or private ambitions, but embody in their own spirit the freedom of the world. They take on the wideness of the whole earth, dwell in love and walk in righteousness. The social order regards the saññyāsin as a parasite since he does not contribute to it materially and does not care for its forms. The state looks on him with suspicion as he does not profess any loyalty to any family or church, race or nation. He does not function in any industrial factory, social system or political machine. These saññyāsins do not serve our policies that make the world unsafe for human life, do not promote our industries that mechanise persons, and do not support our national egoisms that provoke wars. Patriotism is not enough for these fine souls. Life, and not India's life or England's life, demands their devotion. They look upon all men and all groups as equal.

While some forms of Christianity and Buddhism judge the life of the world to be inferior to the life of the monk, and would have loved to place the whole of mankind at one swoop in the cloister, Hinduism, while appreciating the life of the saññyāsin, refrained from condemning the state of the householder. Every state is necessary, and in so far as it is necessary it is good. The blossom does not deny the leaf and the leaf does not deny the stalk nor the stalk the root. The general rule is that we should pass from stage to stage gradually. The liberated soul is not indifferent to the welfare of the world.

The idea of a peaceful eventide after the storm and stress of life, has, therefore, always had a peculiar fascination for the Hindu mind, and the climate and charitable disposition



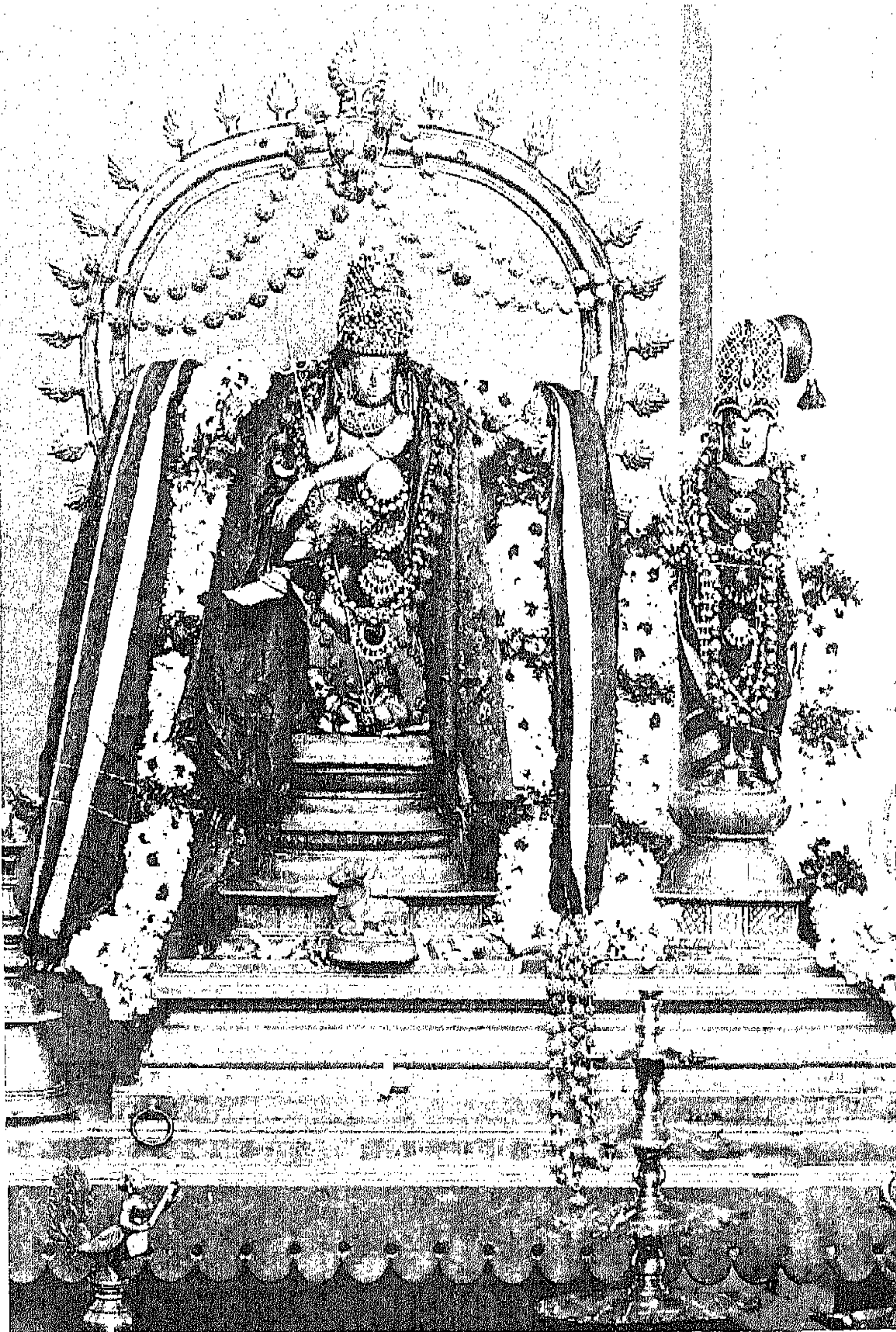
SANYASSINS



[*Photos by courtesy of Lt.-General Sir George MacMunn*

AUSTERITY: THE COUCH OF NAILS

[*Face page* 110



The Images of Shiva and his Consort in Madura Temple

Face page 111]

of the people render the hardships of such an existence far less trying than they would be in Western lands. Out of the teeming millions in India, nearly one in every hundred is a religious mendicant. To the ordinary European these men are a constant source of wonder, and it is difficult for the European mind to distinguish the various names by which they are known to the initiated. They are usually known as "fakirs," but only a very small proportion of them are correctly described by this title, as the fakirs are the Mohammedan section of this great community, numbering five or six millions.

Indeed it is unnecessary even to trouble the reader by a list of these unfamiliar Indian words, as the best general terms for the Hindu friar is Sadhu which means pious, or Sañňyãsin which means one who has abandoned all worldly things.

There are two great Hindu monastic Orders, the Gosains, who are disciples of Shiva, and Bairagis, who are followers of Vishnu. The former are far more numerous and carry out a more severe rule of life. In addition to these two great Orders there are numerous other minor bodies.

Like their medieval prototypes in Western lands, there is no attempt at cleanliness, and the dirtier the holy man is, the more merit he gathers around him.

The vow taken by all ascetics is renunciation of the world, and all belong to and stay from time to time in monasteries which have been erected by the pious all through the centuries. But they merely pass through these monasteries, as their purpose is to wander round the country visiting sacred shrines, begging their living from the charitable, and illustrating by the simplicity of their lives and wants that worldly possessions and comforts do not give the only satisfactions in life. They are always kindly received and treated, partly through the good and tolerant nature of the people, and partly, perhaps, through dread of consequent curses from the gods if they withhold their generosity. The Sadhus either wear distinctive robes or go naked,

smearing their bodies with ashes, which serve the double purpose of protecting them from insects and displaying their humility. They carry begging bowls, made from gourds, in which to receive the offerings of the pious, a drinking vessel and a staff. Many have suspended from a girdle a pair of tongs, which remind us of the instrument with which St. Dunstan twisted the Devil's nose; they are designed to keep away evil spirits. A great number of them wear necklets of human teeth, and their hair is always left uncared for, so that they present a most unkempt and somewhat horrifying appearance.

Although a great number of these Sadhus are really genuine and zealous ascetics, there are a certain number of impostors who go the rounds for a free subsistence and remain in a state of stupid indifference to their surroundings by means of the use of intoxicating drugs.

Formerly the life of a Hindu ascetic was only open to the Brahmans, but members of other castes now enter the community, and any Mussulman can become a fakir.

"A feature of many Indian ascetics is to subject their poor bodies to great austerities. They lie for years on beds of thorns or spikes. There is an authentic case of one sadhu who lay on one for over thirty years. Another well-known penance is to hold the arm over the head, till it is so stiff that it never can be lowered, and sometimes both arms are raised, which means that the sahdu can never feed himself. Nails uncut and curled like ram's horns is a popular culture. Swinging from steel hooks let into loops of flesh cut into the victim's back is also quite popular, and to be seen at festivals. All these severe penances and mortifications do not only bring intense feelings of satisfaction to the performer, and the sure and certain belief of the genuineness of his salvation, but do further emphasize what has been referred to, that there are other things in life that count besides ease.

"The general control over nerves that results from fasts and the mortification do, no doubt, provide some inherent

callousness to physical pain, and thus assist the seeker for righteousness in the weakness of his body.

"It is interesting to know that the terrible spiked bed aforesaid, is derived from the circumstances of death of Bhisma, the leader of the great Aryan clan of the Kuros, who was slain with so many arrows through his body that they protruded behind like the spikes of the bed of penance and remembrance."

Turning to my second heading, Household Prayers, it has been well said that the Hindu villager or citizen is deeply devoted to his religion; it is inseparable from every part of his daily life and is worn into every fibre of his being. The Brahman is described as probably the most religious man in the world. At the earliest sign of dawn he rises from his "couch," which consists of a grass mat on the floor or a rudely constructed native bed, and neither food nor water can pass his lips until he has performed his morning devotions. First, he cleans his teeth with a piece of wood which performs the functions of a toothbrush—his mouth must be clean before he can issue words of prayer. Then he must have his bath, which he takes either in a river or in a tank, or by pouring the water over his head from a brass bowl or an earthenware pot. He then repeats a prayer to the sacred rivers:

> "Oh Ganges! Oh Jumna!
> Oh Godaveri! Oh Sarasvati!
> Oh Narmade! Oh Indus! Oh Kaveri!
> Be ye present in this water!"

and turning towards the rising sun, he pours out three solemn libations to the symbol of the Trinity, saying each time the most sacred of all Hindu prayers:

> "OM, earth, sky and heaven!
> OM, that excellent vivifier!
> Let us meditate upon the Divine Light.
> May He enlighten our understanding."

The name "Om" represents the persons of the Hindu Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

The Brahman next reads one of his sacred books or does reverence to his family deity. He then traces with white lime, if he is a worshipper of Vishnu, or sacred ash of sandalwood made into a paste, if he is a follower of Shiva, the caste marks on his forehead. There are many of these marks, but the commonest consist of what looks like a V—with a line drawn in the middle for Vishnu,—and three horizontal lines for Shiva.

The Brahman then rings a little bell to attract the attention of his household god, and pours a little oil or a few drops of water from the Ganges over the image, or sprinkles some sandalwood powder over the sacred writings. He then sits cross-legged facing the sun, and, with hands together, bows his face to the ground after repeating his creed:

"Glory to Brahm whose form is inscrutable,
Whose essence is divine wisdom,
Who is manifest as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.
OM!"

Again ringing his little bell and bowing, he counts the beads of his rosary, repeating with each bead the name of the god to whom he owes special allegiance. He then mutters some "mantras," or sacred formulae, rings the bell, and morning worship is over.

The actual ceremony of worship varies with the different parts of the country, but the essential features are much the same.

Not content with this morning service, the Brahman again worships at midday; and again at night before he wraps himself in his blanket and lies down to sleep, his last thought is to pay his religious duties to his gods.

The average Hindu does not lay aside his religion when he has said his prayers; he carries it with him into his business, and if he should keep a shop, he will have little

images on the walls which receive attention from time to time, in the hope that the god will help him in his commercial undertakings. Each trade and industry has its own particular gods to whom reverence is paid in the hope of assistance and prosperity, and offerings of coconut, flowers or rice are placed before them daily.

As I mentioned before, the devotion to Ganesh is very widespread, and very many Hindu homes have a little statue of the elephant-god over the entrance.

Religion dominates all the Hindu's domestic arrangements, his food, his cooking, and the eating of his meals. It demands that rice and curry must be eaten with the fingers, and the Brahman's vessel must never touch his lips, as this would mean defilement. I have mentioned above how the shadow of a person of lower caste may render the food unclean, and that even the glance of a low-caste may constitute defilement. Every pious Hindu "firmly believes that, before his birth, the 'pen of Brahma' wrote upon his forehead what he should be and what he should do, his character, his occupation, and his destiny." He believes that caste was the answer of Hinduism to the forces pressing on it from outside. It was the instrument by which Hinduism civilized the different tribes it took into its fold. Any group of people appearing exclusive in any sense was formed into a caste. To quote from the Upton Lectures at Oxford University, "Whenever a group represents a type, a caste arises. If a heresy is born in the bosom of the mother faith and if it spreads and produces a new type, a new caste arises. The Hindu Society has differentiated as many types as can be reasonably differentiated, and is prepared to accept new ones as they arise. It stands for the ordered complexity, the harmonized multiplicity, the many in one which is the clue to the structure of the universe."

Generally speaking, the Indian accepts his place in life without grumbling, and takes a pride in the vocation which he believes that God has given him.

All important family events in the Indian home are accompanied by a religious ceremony. Before a betrothal takes place, the Brahman priest must cast the horoscopes and decide if the stars of the boy and girl are harmonious. The sacrament of marriage, as we shall see, is full of religious observances, and in India, as in Europe, it is the priest who unites the hands of bride and bridegroom and declares them man and wife. From the cradle to the grave the Indian is surrounded by religious ceremony, and the most important of all is when his eldest son places rice in the mouth of his dead father, cracks his skull and lights the funeral pyre.

CHAPTER XI

TEMPLE, MOSQUE AND TOMB

"Into the bosom of the one great sea
Flow streams that come from hills on every side,
Their names are various as their springs,
And thus in every land do men bow down
To one great God, though known by many names."

GOVER: *The Folksongs of Southern India.*

THERE is no other country in the world in which religious buildings abound to the same extent as in India. They vary from little mud platforms to magnificent creations in stone which are the admiration of architects from every quarter of the globe.

Mud is used so universally in India in all sorts of buildings that I have often wondered how India would get on without it. It looks quite well in photographs, but it hardly bears close inspection.

The large majority of Hindu temples, both in the great towns and villages, are small structures, not unlike old-fashioned brick ovens, erected at the base of sacred trees and with no pretence at ornamentation. But India contains some religious monuments which are unique amongst those of the nations of the world.

The spirit of Indian art is, however, quite foreign to Western ideas and very difficult for the European to fully appreciate. Fergusson studied the problem and produced a book, which though published more than half a century ago, is still the classic on the subject.

"Until the excavators' spades brought to light the wonders buried in the sand of the Indus Valley, the oldest

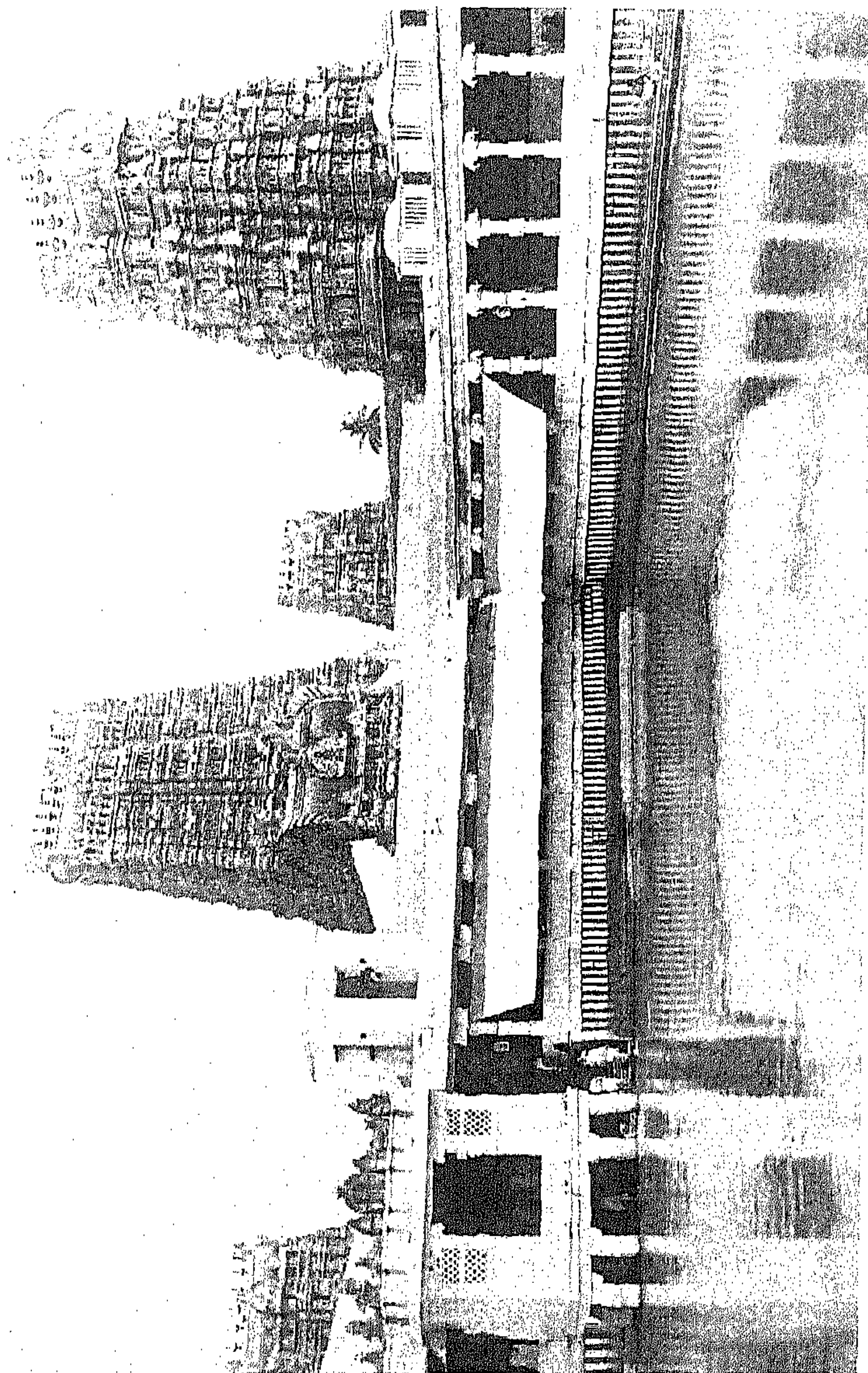
monuments of early Indian civilization only went back to the third century before Christ, when the great King Asoka carved on rocks and pillars the main precepts of the Buddhist faith. Two of these pillars are to be seen at Delhi and another in the Fort at Allahabad.

"The finest specimens of Buddhist building, however, are the topes (stupas) which mark some spot sacred to Buddha, or were meant to contain some relics of his, the rails which surrounded these and other holy places, the *chaityas* or churches, and the *viharas* or monasteries. Far the most impressive group that survives is that at Sanchi in the Bhopal State, on the railway between Bombay and Agra. Topes, rails, monasteries, and some later temples are nobly set on a hill commanding wide and beautiful views, and the visitor will indeed be dull of imagination who does not feel the sanctity and grandeur of a place that is almost comparable with the Acropolis. Less impressive than Sanchi, but not less interesting, is the tope at Sarnath, near Benares, which marks the beginning of Buddha's mission as teacher.

"Holier than either of these in Buddhist eyes is the temple at Buddh-Gaya, near by the bodhi-tree where Buddha attained enlightenment, a lofty pyramid-like building said to have been built by a Brahman in the days of religious tolerance about A.D. 500, before Buddhism was swept out of India by the Brahmanic revival.

"The Buddhists apparently introduced the use of stone, and examples of their religious buildings are found in the rock-cut caves of Karli, Ajanta, Nasik, Ellora, and Kanheri. Some of these in plan are curiously like an early Christian church, with nave, aisles, and apse. Karli is architecturally the finest, but the cave pictures of Ajanta have a nobility which the art of painting never again attained in India, and from them some of the best Indian artists of to-day draw inspiration."

On the North-West Frontier, anciently known as Gandhara, are found ruined monasteries and buried topes which



THE GOLDEN LILY TANK, MADURA TEMPLE

[*Face page* 118



CLOISTER OF JAIN PILLARS AT KUTAB MINAR

Face page 119]

display unique representations of Buddha and the Buddhist pantheon. The free use of Corinthian capitals, friezes of nude boys bearing long garlands, "winged Atlantes without number, and a host of individual motifs clearly establish the influence of Hellenistic art. The mound at Peshawar, locally known as Shah-ji-ki-Dheri, which was explored in 1909, brought to light several interesting sculptures of this school, together with a reliquary casket, the most remarkable bronze object of the Gandhara period. The inscription on the casket left no doubt as to the mound being the *stupa* raised over a relic of Buddha by the Indo-Scythian king Kanishka."

As I have already mentioned, the Jains have given to India some of her most beautiful and sumptuously ornate temples. To this important sect belongs the credit of introducing the dome, and with characteristic modesty the Jains have erected their noblest buildings far from the haunts of men, at Paliland in Gujerat and at Mount Abu in Rajputana.

The Hindus have rivalled the Buddhists in magnificent work in the rock-cut temples at Ellora, where we find the remarkable "Kylas," which is a life-size model of a group of buildings, several hundred feet in length, not built, but sculptured in solid stone, an undertaking which indicates the remarkable religious fervour of the Indian of former days. I refer elsewhere to the Great Temple of Jagannath, but only twenty miles from Puri, in a very inaccessible spot, is the famous Black Pagoda, concerning which Sir John Marshall, the learned Director-General of Archaeology, has recorded that there is no monument of Hinduism that is at once so stupendous and so perfectly proportioned as the Black Pagoda. Stirling fixes the date of the Black Pagoda in the year 1241; it may have been as early as the ninth century of our era. The spire has never been completed. When Fergusson visited Kanarak in 1837, a portion of the Great Tower was still standing.

The shrine at the western end of the temple has been

cleared of a mass of ruins with which it was covered, and it is now possible to get some notion of its splendid carvings which include huge wheels and horses, indicating that the temple was the chariot of the Sun-god to whom it was dedicated. There is a number of very fine carved figures on the walls, but, unhappily, much of the decoration is of a character repulsive to Western eyes; inside the shrine is a beautifully carved throne on which the image of the god once stood. In front of the ruined pagoda is a fine porch built of red sandstone which stands complete with a square base of ninety feet. The pagoda is called *black* in contrast to the whitewashed pagoda at Puri. The roof is beautiful, and covered with elaborate carvings free from all objectionable features, and Fergusson says that there is no roof in India where the same play of light and shade is obtained, with an equal amount of richness and constructive propriety.

One must, however, leave the North and pass to Southern India to realize the prodigal profusion with which the Hindus of the past erected temples to Shiva and Vishnu. These great monuments are remarkable less for their beauty than for their stupendous size and profusion of ornament. They are often enclosed by towering walls with immense and ornate doorways on four sides.

The best known shrines are at Vellore, Tanjore and Madura, but the Temple of Ramesvaram, off the beaten track on an island near the extreme south of the peninsula, is, perhaps, the most noteworthy of them all. It is one of the most venerated Hindu shrines in India, having been founded, according to tradition, by Rama himself. For centuries it has been an object of pilgrimages from all parts of India. The great temple stands on rising ground above a fresh-water lake, about three miles in circumference, in the northern part of the island.

Fergusson says: "If it were proposed to select one temple which should exhibit all the beauties of the Dravidian style in their greatest perfection, and at the same time

exemplify all its characteristic defects of design, the choice would almost inevitably fall upon that of Ramesvaram. In no other temple has the same amount of patient industry been exhibited as here; and in none, unfortunately, has that labour been so thrown away for want of a design appropriate to its display. . . . While the temple at Tanjore produces an effect greater than is due to its mass or detail, this one, with double its dimensions and ten times its elaboration, produces no effect externally, and internally can only be seen in detail, so that the parts hardly in any instance aid one another in producing the effect aimed at."

The Hindus employ their temples in an entirely different way to the monotheistic faiths. They rarely indulge in united religious exercises, and therefore provision is not made for the accommodation of a congregation. Where, as is usually the case, the central shrine is surrounded by courtyards or enclosed spaces of considerable size, these spaces are seldom used for actual worship. At ordinary times they are utilized as meeting-places. Children play about in them and travellers and wandering holy men sleep in them. Like the nave of Old St. Paul's, they are, indeed, places of popular resort and treated with scant reverence.

The temple worship of the ordinary Hindu is usually a very brief performance. He halts in front of the shrine, salutes it by putting his hands together palm to palm, and, touching his forehead, repeats the god's name a few times. He may walk round the shrine three times, but usually passes on his way with only a momentary pause.

The temple courtyards are, however, thronged with worshippers at the great festivals, and offerings usually of small value are made; they consist of leaves of sacred trees, a little fruit, some sweetmeats or a coin. At night the temples during these festivals are illuminated by a very large number of lamps, and the crowd of people who visit the popular temples is often so great that traffic control is a difficult problem. The temples are all more or less well

endowed and in some of the larger ones a wealthy member of the congregation provides a band on the Feast Day, and, more rarely, a reader is employed to read from the sacred books. This reader sits in front of the image of the god and reads with great effect, making gesticulations and modulating his voice. The reader is a Brahman priest and performs his duty very efficiently, but there appears to be no actual exposition of the lofty Hindu precepts which are read. In some temples there is a special endowment fund for the perpetual reading, night and day, by Brahmans who have specialized as readers.

In rural districts the people are fond of a curious sing-song recital of the life and adventures of a god or a saint. The recital is accompanied by professional musicians, and is often continued far into the night.

Gongs or bells are struck in some temples and horns are often wound to call the worshippers at special times. The priest in charge of the temple usually gives the god a daily bath, presents the offerings of the faithful and waves a lamp, which is reminiscent of the incense in Christian churches. In some temples devout Hindus perambulate the central shrine, and the amount of merit gained is in proportion to the number of circles made.

The walls of the temples are frequently whitewashed and on them are depicted scenes of the legendary history of the god to whom the shrine is dedicated. Some of these drawings are reminiscent of the illuminations of medieval manuscripts, and possess considerable merit.

When the Mohammedans attained the upper hand in India, they brought new influences to bear on the architecture of the country. They introduced what has been called the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture in which the dome became a special object of development, and the arch which the Hindu architects had hitherto neglected, was made a feature of the new buildings. The minaret was a necessary addition, as the Moslems introduced the remarkable innovation that the human voice should alone be employed in

the Call to Prayer, and nothing in any religion is more impressive than this Call when it is heard in the dusk of the evening or at dawn.

The requirements of Islam were quite different from those of the Hindus, as the sons of the Prophet had need of wide spaces for their organized congregational acts of worship. The mosques are therefore very different from the Hindu temples, as the Moslems introduced an organized system of communion in prayer.

As a counterblast to the prevailing ornate style, the Moslem rigidly excluded all sculptured representations of living things, with the result that great ingenuity has been displayed in geometric and foliated ornamentation. The limited amount of ornamentation has made the Moslem buildings depend mostly on scale and mass as a means of giving beauty, with the result that we have such magnificent buildings as the Jami Masjid, the Cathedral Mosque, and such gems of architecture as the Pearl Mosque at Delhi.

The Pearl Mosque "owes its charm to its perfect proportions, its harmony of designs, and its beauty of material, rather than to richness of decoration and ornament. In design it is similar to most temples of this kind; a courtyard with a fountain in the middle, surrounded on three sides by arcaded cloisters; while on the entrance side and that facing it are exquisitely chased marble screens." It has been well said that into the fair body of the Indian marble the Moghul Emperors introduced designs and arabesques borrowed from the Persia of ancient history, and flowers of exquisite hue and symmetry created by the artistic brains of great Florentine artists, who were tempted to spend their genius in India by the well-filled coffers of Shah Jehan.

A few miles from Delhi are the ruins of a great mosque with the famous minaret, the Kutab-minar, which is regarded as one of the most beautiful towers in the world. The sculptures that cover its surface have been compared

to those upon the column of Trajan in Rome and the Column Vendôme in Paris; but they are far more noteworthy. The inscriptions on the famous European monuments are merely intended to relate the military triumphs of the men in whose honour they were erected, but the inscriptions on the Kutab-minar testify to the Power and Glory of Allah and to the virtues of Mohammed, His Prophet.

The palaces of the Moghuls remain to remind us of the imperial grandeur of a line of Emperors, whose style of living was probably more splendid than that of any monarch of any nation before or since their time. Their extravagance was unbounded and their love of display has never been surpassed.

The Halls of Public and Private audience in Delhi Fort are exquisite monuments to the genius of the Moghul architects. In the Hall of Private Audience once stood the Peacock Throne, which was of sufficient value to pay the debts of a nation! The Throne has gone, but the priceless marble hall remains, and gazing at its beauty, one can pardon the builder who carved over the outer arches at either end the famous Persian inscription—

"Agar Fardaus bar ru-i-zamin ast
Hamin ast wa hamin ast wa hamin ast."

"If there is a Paradise on the face of the earth,
It is this, oh! it is this, oh! it is this."

The Indian landscape is dotted over with tombs which have been erected to departed Hindus who have acquired special merit, for instance, wives who have committed *suttee*, but it was left to the Moslem to introduce the idea of really splendid mausoleums to the departed. There are many of these great tombs, but the most famous is the Taj Mahal, which was erected by Shah Jehan to his favourite wife, Mumtaz-i-Mahal. The Taj is erected in a beautiful garden, the gateway into which is perhaps the

finest in India and is "a worthy pendant to the Taj itself." The garden is exquisitely laid out, with a view to setting off the unspeakable charms of that "dream of loveliness embodied in white marble." The Taj has well been described as a work "conceived by Titans and finished by jewellers." The grandeur of the conception and the wonderful delicacy of the workmanship cannot fail to impress even the most unlearned in the architectural art. Much has been written, and all in unstinted praise, of this incomparable edifice; and yet, like the writer, every visitor comes to its presence, feels the growing thrill of its beauty, and exclaims, "The half was never told!" And few leave the place without returning to be enthralled once more by a moonlight view of this thing of beauty. How great, indeed, must have been the love of that otherwise cruel monarch for his departed empress that he should have exhausted so much wealth (some say that the Taj cost thirty million rupees) and conceived so much of beauty wherewith to embalm her memory. And as we enter the mausoleum and stand in the presence of the lovely shrines which it encases—that of Mumtaz-i-Mahal, and that of the emperor himself—the mind is awed and may find expression in Sir Edwin Arnold's *poetic fancy*—

> "Here in the heart of all,
> With chapels girdled, shut apart by screens,
> The shrine's self stands, white, delicately white,
> White as the cheek of Mumtaz-i-Mahal,
> When Shah Jehan let fall a king's tear there.
> White as the breast her new babe vainly pressed
> That ill day in the camp at Burhanpur."

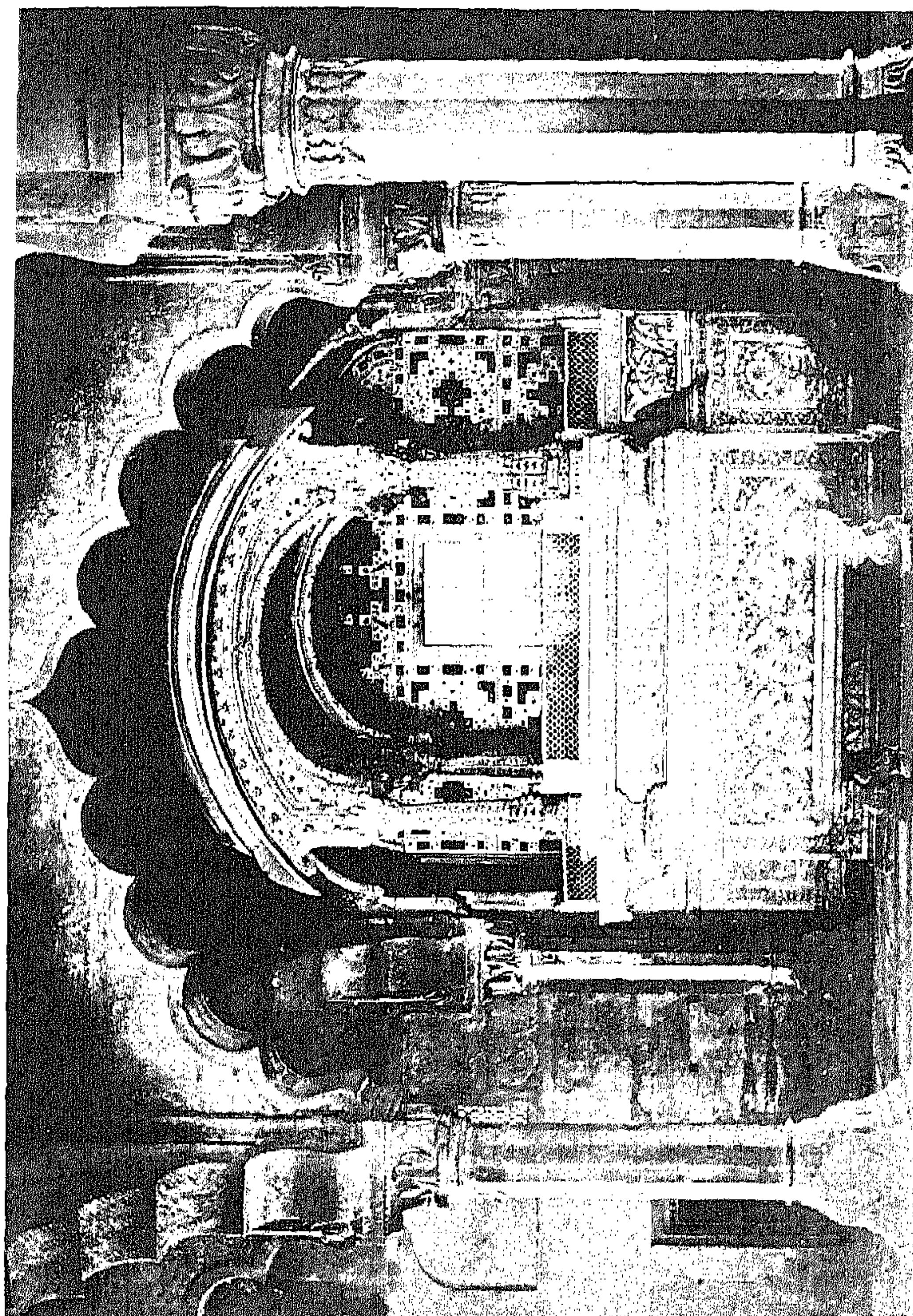
The fair shrine stands, guarding two cenotaphs, and upon a panel of his own shrine the mourning emperor had inscribed these significant words from ancient traditions: "Saith Jesus, on whom be peace, this world is a bridge. Pass thou over it, but build not upon. This world is one hour; give its minutes to thy prayers, for the rest is unseen."

We cannot but feel that the Taj is the highest expression of art that human affection and domestic affliction have ever achieved.

Six miles away from Agra is the tomb of the Great Akbar, which rivals even the Taj in splendour. It is curious to recall that the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond was kept in this mausoleum for seventy years until 1739, when the Persians sacked the Palace of the Moghuls and carried it away to their own country.

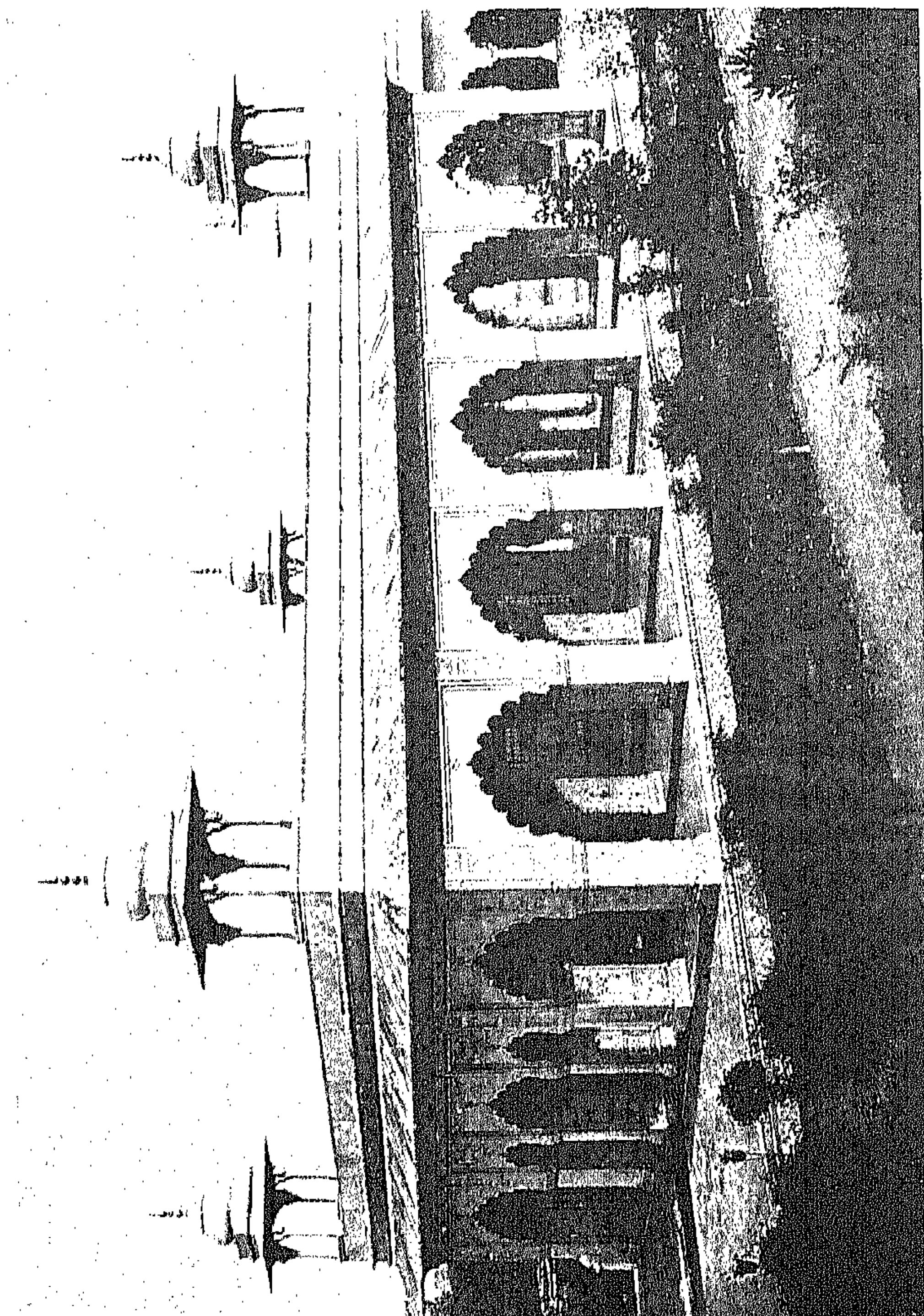
Besides the great tombs at Agra and Delhi, the tomb of the Mahmud at Bijapur is remarkable, as it shows the greatest extent of floor space in any building in the world roofed by a single dome, not even excepting the Pantheon.

India has many claims to greatness, but not the least among them are her Temples, Mosques and Tombs.



THE EMPEROR'S THRONE IN THE HALL OF PUBLIC AUDIENCE, DELHI FORT

[*Face page* 126



Exterior of the Diwan-i-Khas, Hall of Private Audience, Delhi Fort

Face page 127]

CHAPTER XII

SACRED STREAMS AND HOLY CITIES

"Wash you, make you clean."
ISAIAH I; 16.

INDIA has whole cities which are holy, and many sacred rivers and tanks which form a striking feature in the religious life of the people.

The imagination of the Brahmans has placed the Indian Olympus far up in the great Himalayan peaks amongst the eternal snows, and the great rivers of the north are looked upon as proceeding directly from the thrones of the gods. The holy Ganges with its great tributaries the Jumn and the Gogra, the mighty Brahmaputra with its course of 1,800 miles, and the Indus with its four tributaries, all flow down from the great glaciers and snow-fields of this immense range of mountains. In the South are the sacred rivers, the Nerbudda, Tapti, Godaveri, Kistna, and Kavari, all believed to have a miraculous subterranean connection with "Mother Ganges," the most sacred of them all.

The Hindus regard these rivers not only as sacred but even divine. The Ganges is a mighty goddess, and "Gunga má ki jai!", which may be more freely translated "Mother Ganges for ever!", is a favourite Hindu rallying cry. One night as the train in which Mr. Deaville Walker was travelling crossed the long bridge over the broad waters of the Godaveri, his fellow-passengers rose from their seats and threw small coins through the carriage windows into the river far below. In response to an enquiry as to the reason, they explained that they were returning safely

from a journey and the coins were little thank-offerings to the river-goddess for her protecting care.

During certain seasons of the year, special pilgrimages are made to the great rivers in order to receive spiritual benefits from the rivers themselves, for bathing in these sacred waters imparts cleansing and salvation, and the more sacred the river the more certain will be the efficacy of the cleansing.

The Hindu looks upon sin not as an offence against the moral law but as some breach of his caste rules. Like the Hebrew of old, he regards it as a material or bodily defilement, so it is not surprising that he considers mere ablutions of the body sufficient to wipe it out.

With the exception of the Ganges, the purifying power of the sacred streams and tanks is not always constant.

Some waters are only endowed with cleansing powers at long intervals, for instance the Godaveri, at Nasik, possesses very special properties every twelfth year. On these occasions, a miracle occurs and all the waters of all the sacred rivers of India converge at Nasik, and the pilgrims bathing there at that time obtain all the cleansing, blessing and merit that could otherwise only be secured by separate pilgrimages to each of the holy rivers in turn.

The sacredness of the Godaveri is said to have been revealed to Rama, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, and this holy stream is reputed to issue from the same source as the Ganges by means of an underground passage.

On the banks of the river at Nasik, no less than thirteen hundred families of Brahman priests are settled and all Hindus of rank who visit the place leave a memorial with their family priest. Each noble family has one of these *Upadhyas*, as they are styled, and a record is kept in which are entered the names of the visitor's ancestors, so that the pedigree of every Hindu chief is in the keeping of these priests. Even the Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, to whom I have previously referred, had his Upadhya at Nasik. The present Gaekwar, the ruling Prince of Baroda, owes his

throne to the fact that when an heir was sought to succeed a deposed chief in 1874, the family priest at Nasik supplied the necessary proofs of the prince's legitimate descent from the third Gaekwar.

The river-side is lined with flights of steps and dotted with temples and shrines, and, when hundreds of men and women are bathing, presents an extremely picturesque sight, only surpassed on the banks of the Ganges at Benares.

The Nerbudda, which rises in the Central Provinces and flows into the Gulf of Cambay, is one of the favourite sacred streams. General Sleeman tells a charming little legend about its marriage with the little stream, Sōn. The preliminary ceremonies having been performed, the river came to fetch his bride, up to which time the bride and bridegroom were supposed never to have seen each other. The Nerbudda, womanlike, became impatient to know what her future husband was going to be like, and sent a messenger, the daughter of a barber, to have a close look at him telling her to return at once and tell her all about her bridegroom. Unfortunately, His Majesty was captivated by the little messenger, Johila, who yielded to his caresses. As soon as Her Majesty, the Nerbudda, heard about this she rushed forward and with one foot sent the Sōn rolling back to the east whence he came, and with the other kicked the little Johila after him.

Any Englishman can conceive the idea of describing the ocean as a "steed that knows his rider," and "patting the crested billow as his flowing mane," but, says Sleeman, "he must come to India to understand how every individual of a whole community of many millions can address a fine river as a living being, a sovereign princess, who hears and understands all they say, and exercises a kind of local superintendence over their affairs, without a single temple in which her image is worshipped, or a single priest to profit by the delusion."

A statue of little Johila, the barber's daughter, stands in the temple of the goddess Nerbudda, and General Sleeman

tells that in his time first overtures with regard to all matrimonial transactions were made through the medium of a barber, whether they were from a prince or a peasant. This is not the case nowadays. The match-maker may be the family barber for the lower castes, but amongst the "twice-born" it is generally a Brahman who goes about from one house to another till he discovers a baby girl of suitable rank.

Allahabad is a very sacred spot, as the Aryans possessed a very ancient city here called Prayag, which means "the Place of Sacrifice," and the Hindus believe that Brahma performed the Horse Sacrifice where the city now stands to celebrate his recovery of the four Vedas. In the seventh century of our era, Hiuen Tsang, the Buddhist pilgrim, visited and described the town. It is situated near the junction of the two great rivers, the Jumna and the Ganges, and, as already mentioned, one of the most famous Pillars of Asoka is to be found in the Fort. Here, too, is the Undying Banyan Tree described by the Chinese pilgrim, who tells us that in the midst of the city stood a temple of Brahma at which the presentation of a single piece of money produced as much merit as that of a thousand pieces elsewhere. He adds a description of the famous undying banyan tree which is still pointed out.

Allahabad has a special interest to the writer as it was here he first saw the Feast of Lamps mentioned in the preface, and it was from this Holy Spot that he started his own pilgrimage as an Ambassador of Saint John.

Hardwar, situated at the mouth of a gorge through which the mighty Ganges enters the plains, is one of the holiest places in Hindu India. Like Allahabad it was described by the Chinese pilgrim, already mentioned. It has had many names in the past and its present title, which signifies the "Door of Hari" or Vishnu, is probably comparatively modern. There is a famous temple which is celebrated as the scene of the sacrifice of Suttee, the daughter of Shiva,

who was consumed by her own splendour on the banks of the Ganges. The bathing-ghat is noteworthy for the footprint of Hari which is impressed on a stone let into the upper wall and is an object of great veneration at the annual gatherings. Each pilgrim struggles to be the first to plunge into the pool when the propitious moment is announced, and the police have a difficult job preventing the crowd from trampling one another to death or drowning each other in the scramble into the holy water. The great festival takes place in April or May on the anniversary of the day on which the Ganges is said to have first appeared. Every twelfth year when the planet Jupiter is in Aquarius, a feast of peculiar sanctity occurs. In ordinary years the number of pilgrims amounts to one hundred thousand, but at these great twelve-yearly festivals the numbers amount to five or six hundred thousand. This holy spot has been the scene of riots between the monks of the Gosain and Bairagi Orders in the past, but the feast now usually passes off in the most orderly manner. From Hardwar many of the pilgrims continue their journey to the shrine of Kedarnath, which is far up in the Himalayas.

The ancient town of Muttra, formerly spelt Mathura, is the great holy city on the Jumna. It was referred to by Ptolemy, and during the Buddhist period was a great stronghold of Buddhism. Not only the town but the greater part of the district commands the reverence and respect of Hindus. Near by are situated places of pilgrimage connected with the cult of Krishna which are visited annually by immense crowds of devout pilgrims. It was here that Krishna sported with the milkmaids, and the "forest pilgrimage" is carried out in the district. There are few things more impressive than the Arati ceremony, or the worship of the river, which takes place at one of the ghats or bathing places about dusk. Cows, monkeys and turtles are fed, and the whole scene is one difficult to describe, but unforgettable when once seen. The river is full of turtles; some of which are enormous and very tame. One

of the most interesting spots is a little tank in which it is said that Krishna's baby linen was washed!

Not far from this place of holy pilgrimage is Muttra Cantonment which is of peculiar interest to soldiers as it is the only place in India where British cavalry are stationed without any other troops.

Most holy of all Indian cities is Benares where if he could every Hindu would come to die. The town is called Kasi by the Hindus, and they generally add to the name the suffix "Ji," which, as pointed out in a later chapter, is a token of respect. This ancient city has been the religious capital of India far beyond historic times. It is mentioned in both the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, the great epic poems of Hinduism, and derives its peculiar sanctity from the fact that Brahma himself made the Horse Sacrifice with no less than ten horses on this spot. Benares is said to combine the virtues of all other places of pilgrimage, so much so "that anyone of whatever creed, and however great his misdeeds, dying within the compass of the Panch Kosi road which surrounds Benares, is transported straight to Heaven." This belief leads many people to end their days at Benares.

The banks of the river are bordered by flights of stone steps, or *ghats*, and the best way to see the City and the river bank is to pass along the river in a boat in the early morning when vast crowds of pilgrims come down to bathe and drink the water of the sacred stream.

From a boat may be observed a long line of funeral pyres. Theoretically, the bodies should be reduced to ashes, which are sprinkled on the river surface, but too often the work of cremation is imperfectly carried out, and the consignment of what are sometimes only partially charred corpses to the river is a somewhat gruesome sight.

The Ganges rises in an ice cave in the Himalayas, and where it first issues from the mountains, it is called the Bhagirathi. Not until it joins with the Jahsari and the Alaknanda is the united stream known as the Ganges.

Ajodhya, situated six miles from Fyzabad, the former capital of the Kingdom of Oudh, on the banks of the Gogra, is a town sacred to Rama and Hanuman. It is a small place on the site of an ancient city which is said to have covered an area of nearly one hundred miles. Ajodhya claims to have been the capital of the Solar race of kings, of whom Manu, the Law-Giver, was the first. The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, tells us that he found here twenty Buddhist monasteries with three thousand monks, and that the celebrated Toothbrush-Tree of Buddha grew at Ajodhya. There is a temple to Rama, and the image of the god contains a huge gleaming jewel which is said to be a diamond, but is probably a light-coloured sapphire. This temple is surrounded by massive high walls which convert it into a sort of fortress. It is called Hanuman's Fortress, and the neighbouring trees swarm with sacred grey monkeys who represent the troops of the Monkey God.

In another temple, said to be of great antiquity and called the Hall of Gold, are images of Sita and Rama which are crowned with gold.

The town of Puri, about three hundred miles from Calcutta, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, is sacred to Jagannath. It is a great place for pilgrimages, and the annual income of the temple is said to be 100,000 rupees, whilst the annual offerings of the pilgrims amount to 75,000 rupees. The famous Koh-i-Noor which now adorns the King's crown was bequeathed on his death-bed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the last Sikh ruler of the Punjab, to Jagannath.

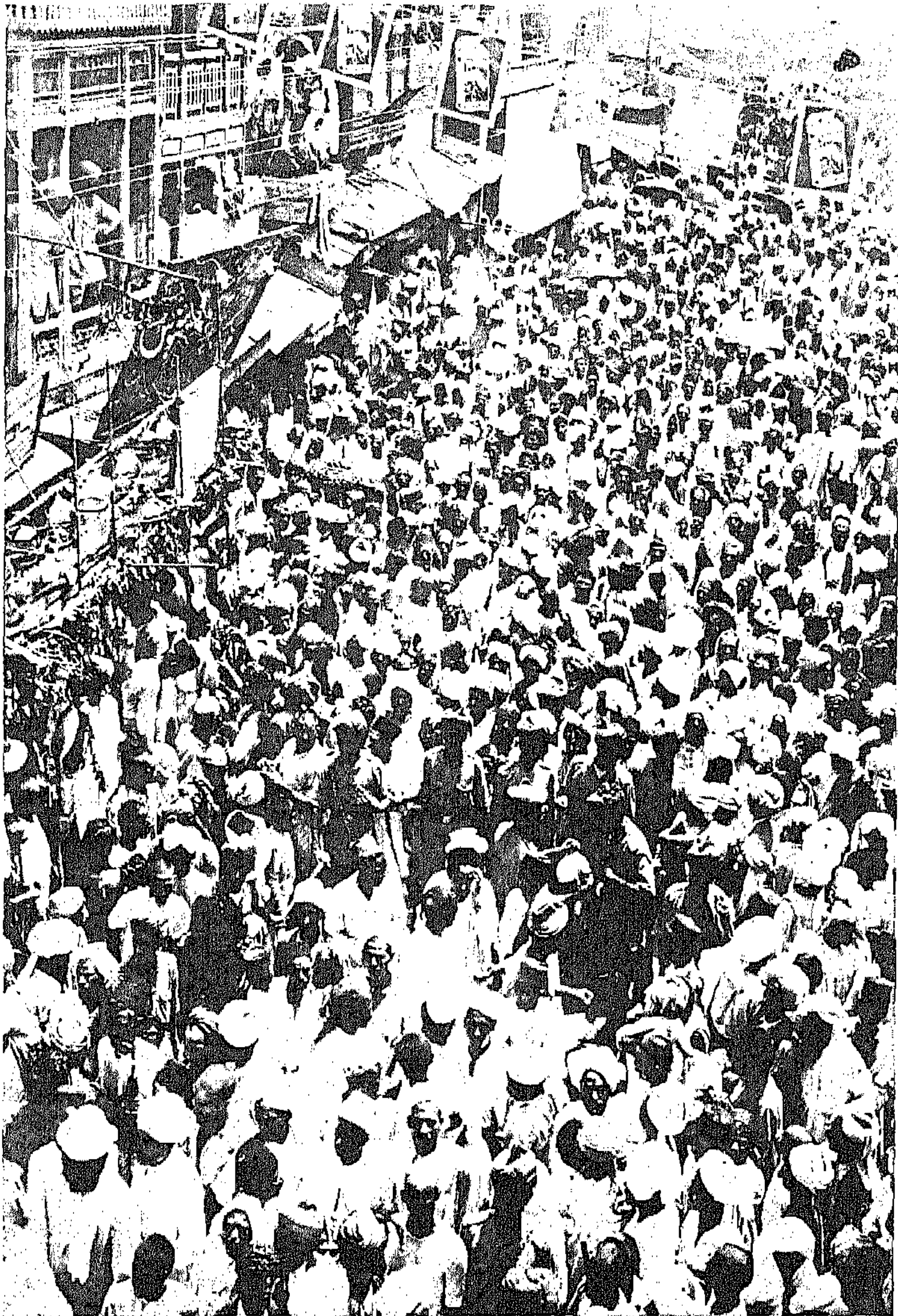
This temple is an immense ecclesiastical institution. There are more than six thousand male adults as priests, warders of the temple, and pilgrim guides, and it is conjectured that probably twenty thousand men, women and children are "hangers-on" to the god. The immediate attendants on the god are divided into thirty-six orders and ninety-seven classes. The Rajah of Khurda, who represents the royal house of Orissa, is the chief of the servants

of the god. There are distinct sets of attendants to put the god to bed, to dress and bath him, and a large band of nautch girls to sing and dance before him. The town itself is made up of mean and narrow streets containing innumerable lodging houses for pilgrims. There is one fine road along which passes Jagannath in his mighty chariot once a year from his temple to his country house. The town is of very great antiquity, and it was here that Buddha's tooth was preserved before it was finally transferred to Ceylon.

Jagannath, which signifies "Lord of the Universe," is really one of the titles of Krishna, and the immense popularity of this shrine is due to the fact that the doctrine originally preached before Krishna was that all castes were equal. The image of the god is a rudely carved log believed to be a Buddhist emblem adopted for worship by the Brahmans. In the annual procession, fanatical pilgrims in former days rushed forward to drag the huge car of the god and fatal accidents were frequent. It is stated that votaries used to throw themselves before the advancing wheels of the car, but the ceremonial is now carefully supervised and such accidents are very infrequent.

The temple stands on rising ground, and is an immense structure surrounded by a street about forty-five feet broad. The sacred enclosure is entered by the Lion Gate, so called from two immense lions standing on either side of it. On entering the gate, the pilgrims are slightly struck with a wand by one of the temple attendants.

The Country house of the god, to which I have referred, is about a mile from the temple, and the great car on which the god is transported is over forty feet high and over thirty feet square, and is supported on sixteen wheels seven feet in diameter! The car is dragged by more than four thousand professional haulers, who come from the surrounding district and live at the expense of the pilgrims during the festival. The car is broken up at intervals and its fragments become sacred relics.



[Photo: Indian State Railways

INDIA'S TEEMING MILLIONS

A few of them on the way to Dusserah Festival.

[Face page 134

Face page 135]



[Photo: Indian Trade Publicity Office

A Festival at Madura Temple

On the sea-shore is a great archway called the "Door of Paradise" where, when all the ceremonies are finished, the pilgrims bathe in the surf and wash away their sins. It is a curious sight to see hundreds of men and women bathing in the sea with the surf rolling over them.

I have only room to mention one other sacred spot—Sagar Island, where the Ganges joins the sea. Here, at the beginning of January, takes place the greatest bathing festival of Bengal. From fifty to sixty thousand pilgrims from all parts of the Peninsula assemble on the island, and the bathing ceremonies usually last for three days.

Here, as elsewhere, the ceremonies are associated with one of the great fairs to which I refer in a subsequent chapter.

Enough has been said to show that if an abundance, indeed a superabundance, of sacred places can make a country holy, India is holy indeed.

CHAPTER XIII

DIVINE PLANTS, HALLOWED ANIMALS AND SACRED STONES

"I saw the starry Tree
Eternity
Put forth the blossom Time."

PROTEUS.

"FOR the tree of the field is man's life." So speaks Moses in Deuteronomy which indicates that trees were regarded as very important in Old Testament days. The Lawgiver formulated for the Children of Israel very particular instructions concerning them. The fruit of the trees planted on the entry of the Israelites into the Promised Land was to be counted as "uncircumcised" for three years, in the fourth year it was to be held holy "to praise the Lord withal," and then in the fifth year it might be used as food, but a tithe of the fruit was to be holy unto the Lord.

The Jew was, therefore, taught to respect the tree as producing part of his sustenance; the Hindu was taught to worship and revere it in the belief that it would influence his own personal well-being.

So as time went on certain trees came to be regarded as habitations of the gods, and an oath taken beneath their branches was binding.

Nothing can be more natural than the veneration for trees in a tropical country. The tree provides grateful shade and its fruit is often a valuable source of food. It is not surprising, therefore, to find a tree-cult as far back as Vedic times, and trees, or rather the spirits which inhabit them, invoked as deities. The widespread belief in the World-tree passed to Buddhism in the cult of the Bodhi.

It is easy to understand primitive people investing trees with powers influencing the fertility of crops and human beings. To such trees, offerings were made at seed-time and harvest, and it was but a step to invest them with all sorts of divine attributes, as the waving of their leaves to primitive minds clearly showed that they held spirits! Groves, indeed, have been looked upon from time immemorial as the home of gods, and amongst the Kols and similar tribes no one dares to cut down forest trees or even collect wood from under their branches.

The unwillingness to cut down trees is as old as the Brahmanic books, and Crooke tells us that when the English were clearing the forest in Bengal, no wood-cutter would ply his axe till the European overseer struck the first blow, and thus took the wrath of the gods upon himself.

Evergreen trees are regarded by some devout Hindus as types of eternal life, and the forest tribes bury their dead in trees and believe that the spirits of the dead inhabit them.

There are many sacred trees in India and the more important belong to the Fig species. The Banyan has received homage from the Hindus through many ages, and its numerous stems might easily be regarded as the home of gods and spirits. Even Bishop Heber, when he saw a great banyan tree growing, exclaimed: "What a noble place of worship!" and it is said that to this day a small sect in Baroda takes its name from the banyan and does *puja* to this great forest king. The tree is believed to have derived its name from the fact that the Hindu traders, the Bannias, used to worship it.

Southey, in his *Curse of Kehama*, describes one of these trees in picturesque language:

"In the midst an aged Banian grew.
It was a goodly sight to see
That venerable tree,

For o'er the lawn, irregularly spread,
Fifty straight columns propt its lofty head;
And many a long depending shoot
  Seeking to strike the root,
Straight like a plummet grew towards the ground,
Some of the lower boughs which crost their way,
Fixing their bearded fibres round and round,
With many a ring and wild contortion wound;
Some with the passing wind at times, with sway
  Of gentle motion swung;
Others of younger growth, unmoved, were hung
Like stone-drops from the cavern's fretted height."

"The anthropomorphic worship of the banyan is represented on a Buddhist sculpture from Malwa, and is pictured as the 'wishing tree' with long hanging roots from which such quantities of gold in the form of small square pieces is dropping that the vessels placed beneath to catch them are overflowing. In some carvings at Gaya, near Bengal, two human hands are extended from the tree, one offering a plate with food, the other containing wine or water, towards the figure of a man who is holding out his right hand to receive them."

The famous "undying banyan" at Allahabad, to which I have referred in the last chapter, is mentioned in Hindu legend as the place where Rama, his wife Sita, and brother Lakshmana, took refuge.

Hiuen Tsiang, the gossiping Chinese pilgrim already mentioned, described the Allahabad banyan as a tree with widespreading branches, said to be the dwelling-place of a man-eating demon. It was surrounded with human bones which were the remains of the pilgrims who used to fling themselves into the water at the sacred junction of the two rivers, a custom which, he says, had been observed from time immemorial.

Some banyans grow to a most remarkable size, notably the great tree in the Royal Botanical Gardens at Calcutta. This tree covers ground a thousand feet in circumference, and is nearly ninety feet in height. A tree which grew

near Hardoi, in Oudh, but which has now been destroyed, is said to have sheltered two regiments in the Mutiny. In many places, legends are told of great trees springing from the tooth-twig of Buddha. The famous Banyan, the Kabir Wad, which stood on an island in the Narbada, has left little trace of its former grandeur. Its sanctity dates from the time when Buddhism held sway over the land, but the shrine which marks the spot is dedicated to the Saint Kabir who lived at the end of the fourteenth century. It was under a banyan tree that the Indian sages used to sit in a state of nudity, and there is little oriental exaggeration in the statement that ten thousand men could be covered by the shadow of a single tree.

Travellers' tales have fired the imagination of our English poets, and Ben Jonson, though he never saw one, gives us a good description of the banyan's growth in the following lines:

"The goodly bole being got
To certain cubits' height, from every side
The boughs decline, which taking root afresh,
Spring up new boles and these spring new and newer,
Till the whole tree becomes a porticus,
Or arched arbour, able to receive
A numerous troop."

But even this fine word-picture is surpassed by Milton, who, in *Paradise Lost,* gives us the sonorous lines:

"The fig-tree at this day to Indians known
In Malabar or Deccan, spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that on the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade,
High over-arched and echoing walks between."

More widespread in distribution than the banyan is the *pipal,* which is found all over the country. Every village has its special tree and the village elders hold their councils

beneath its graceful foliage. The most famous of these trees is the sacred pipal at Gaya under which Buddha sat when he gained wisdom. The original pipal of Buddha has been cut down many times, but the tree is a quickly growing variety, and Crooke suggests that as many as twenty successors of it have sprung from seed from the time of Asoka to the present day.

When Buddhism was established in Ceylon, a branch of the holy tree under which Buddha had received enlightenment was asked for by the King Tissa. Sir Emerson Tennent writes: "The difficulty of severing a portion without the sacrilegious offence of 'lopping it with any weapon,' was overcome by the miracle of the branch detaching itself spontaneously, and descending with its roots into the fragrant earth prepared for it in a golden vase, in which it was transported by sea to Ceylon, and planted by King Tissa in the spot at Anarajapoora, where, after the lapse of more than two thousand years, it still continues to flourish, and to receive the veneration of all Buddhist nations."

The pipal, which waves its leaves in an uncanny way, inspires with awe the simple village folk, and even puts the fear of the gods into the heart of the shopkeepers.

There is a story told that the merchants of a small town objected to a pipal in their market-place as they were unable to make untruthful statements with regard to their wares under its sacred shade.

The bilva, or oak-apple, and the asoka and acacia are associated with different deities. The asoka is sacred to Kama, the god of love, and a pretty piece of folk-lore relates that the buds will instantly open in full splendour if the foot of a beautiful woman touches the roots of the tree.

I refer in Chapter XVII to the curious custom of the marriage of trees, but just as interesting is the worship of the rag trees which are found in India and in various parts of Europe. The worshipper ties a bit of clothing to the tree, and thus obtains the help of the god in getting

rid of some complaint. In the Simla hills, the peasants transfer their maladies to a tree by driving a nail into its trunk.

Besides the numerous sacred trees, there are various sacred plants, notably the tulsi plant which grows in sandy and uncultivated places. It is an ancient variety of the basil and the Brahmans regard it as symbolic of the wife of Vishnu and worship is offered to it daily. The little plant is brought to the bedside of a dying Brahman, a piece of the root is placed in his mouth, its leaves are placed on his face and chest, and finally he is sprinkled with water by means of a twig of the sacred plant. During this ceremony, the friends of the dying man cry out: "Tulsi! Tulsi! Tulsi!" and he can then die in the certainty that he will pass straight to Swarga—the heaven inhabited by Krishna.

Dr. Sorabji, in speaking of the gradual emancipation of Indian women, says: "Still do they steal out in the dawn-hour to pour an oblation of Ganges water to the Earth-Mother before the sprig of sacred basil. But the basil is grown in a pot, not on an altar. It is to be propitiated, not worshipped. It is to be propitiated on the way to the fast-opening door, not worshipped as symbolical of the whole duty of the woman of the inside."

> "Forget not the fragrance of the basil
> In marrying, in burying, in loving."

The Indian borage is also regarded with reverence. It is looked upon as sacred to Vishnu, and the Brahmans make use of it in many of their ceremonies in the belief that it possesses the virtue of purifying everything it touches.

Besides trees and plants, a great many animals are held sacred, as they were the vehicles of the gods and goddesses. The eagle is sacred to Vishnu, the swan to Brahma and the peacock to Sarasvati. Snakes and monkeys have already

been referred to, and the elephant is represented in Hindu mythology as supporting the ends of the universe. The great beast has a place in the Hindu pantheon as Airavat, the sacred elephant of India.

As already pointed out, Ganesh, with his elephant-head, is the God of Good Luck, and so late as 1813, a white elephant caught in Travancore was believed to indicate a prosperous reign for the young Maharaja.

Kali rides on a tiger, and a whole host of traditions and superstitions have gathered round this king of Indian forests. In some parts of the hills, when a man is killed by a tiger no one will visit the spot until a priest has gone through a series of antics representing the animal in his fatal spring which end by taking up from the ground a mouthful of the blood-stained earth! Of the various forms of tiger worship, the most curious used formerly to take place at Coorg, where, at a tiger-hunt, the carcass was raised on a wooden frame, and the lucky sportsman who had killed the beast was solemnly wedded to the departed soul of the tiger! The spectacle finished with a dance round the carcass accompanied by music and feasting, and the tiger-slayer became entitled to wear a long moustache, a privilege which, in the ordinary way, was only permitted to the ruling chief!

The cow has always been regarded as a very sacred animal, due no doubt to its usefulness to the Brahmans, many of whom make milk their principal article of diet. The orthodox Hindu speaks of the cow as his mother, and belief in the sanctity of this animal has increased rather than decreased under the teaching of the Arya Samaj, which has already been referred to as a reformed form of monotheistic Hinduism. The old kings of Madura used to undergo re-birth by passing through a cow of bronze, and this ceremony is still maintained as being the most efficacious in removing sin and impurity. A writer at the end of the eighteenth century tells us that the King of Travancore had to creep through a golden cow because he

had burned some Hindu temples. The ceremony has been carried out as recently as the last century, when the Maharajah entered a large golden vessel filled with water which had been mixed with all the products of the sacred cow. He bathed four times in this curious fluid while the Brahmans chanted hymns. By this ceremony he was raised from the lower caste to which he belonged, to the dignity of a Brahman. Crooke says at the beginning of the present century, the ambassadors of a rajah who had lost caste by going over the ocean which Indians call the "Black Water" were purified by passing through the golden image of a cow.

It will be readily understood that this veneration of the cow is a fruitful source of communal riots between the Hindus and Mohammedans, as the followers of Islam are particularly fond of beef which is, of course, anathema to all orthodox Hindus.

I refer in a later chapter to pebbles from the beds of sacred rivers which are worshipped in many Hindu households and temples as symbols of the gods, similarly amongst the aboriginal tribes, stones of various kinds are regarded with superstitious awe. Special stones are regarded as abodes of spirits all over the Naga hills. Hutton tells us that in Lazemi there were a pair of stones, male and female which cohabited and bred, and whose safe-keeping and propitiation was looked on as very necessary to the prosperity of the village. They were kept in a secret spot known only to the priest and two of the old men of the village who unearthed them about once in every three years. The stones were said to come to the surface of their own accord at the proper date; after they had been feasted with due ceremony they were again buried in private by the priest and his companions.

The Lhota Naga tribesman believes that special stones called "oha" are bringers of good fortune. These stones are worn smooth by water and vary in size from a walnut to a man's head. They have been handed down from genera-

tion to generation and are not added to nowadays, but individuals who are fortunate enough to find small "oha" stones in the jungle, keep them as private sources of good luck. The distinguishing features of an "oha" are that it must be round and smooth and be found resting on the ground in a little nest which it has made for itself.

In pre-Hindu times, the worship of stones was carried on regularly in Manipur, and the fortune of the State was symbolized by "animals of the Sun," built of masonry to resemble stone. The Chronicles tell us that stones were even looted from defeated Naga villages and brought down to Imphal, the chief town of Manipur.

At Maikel, an important Naga village, there is a war stone which is very closely guarded. This stone is believed to possess great virtue in imparting strength to warriors, and no woman may look upon it.

Stones attain very high importance in Manipur, as the more powerful deities are represented by rough stones which the Manipuris regard not as the image of the Deity, but as his abode.

A book and not a chapter might be devoted to these curious customs which have taught our Indian friends to find:

> "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones and good in everything."

CHAPTER XIV

PILGRIMS, FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

"Most roads lead men homewards,
My road leads me forth."
JOHN MASEFIELD.

"And smale foules maken melodie,
That slepen alle night with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages."
CHAUCER: *Canterbury Tales.*

THE Hindu religion has made India a land of pilgrims. From the beginning of the cold season when the autumn crops have been harvested and the spring crops sown, a large section of the community is always on the move paying visits to sacred shrines. The more inaccessible the shrine, the greater the merit in visiting it. For example, thousands of Hindus from the scorching plains visit Amarnath in Kashmir, which is situated at an altitude of 14,000 feet and surrounded by perpetual snows. Ill-clad and ill-fed, many of the pilgrims perish.

Pilgrimages were a feature of the early Christian Church and the Older Faith still attaches great importance to them. Even the Theosophists have a good word for them, as Mrs. Besant says "Places may be made sacred by the living in them of saints, whose pure magnetism, radiating from them, attunes the whole atmosphere to peace-giving vibrations. Sometimes holy men, or Beings from the higher worlds, will directly magnetize a certain place, as in the case mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, where an Angel came at a certain season and touched the water, giving it healing

qualities. In such places even careless worldly men will sometimes feel the blessed influence, and will be temporarily softened and inclined toward higher things. . . .

"This is the rationale of places of pilgrimage, of temporary retreats into seclusion; the man turns inward to seek the God within him, and is aided by the atmosphere created by thousands of others, who before him have sought the same in the same place. For in such a place there is not only the magnetization produced by a single saint, or by the visit of some great Being of the invisible world; each person, who visits the spot with a heart full of reverence and devotion, and is attuned to its vibrations, reinforces those vibrations with his own life, and leaves the spot better than it was when he came to it."

To the devout Mussulman, a pilgrimage to Mecca is an essential obligation of his creed. Syed Ali says: "The wisdom which incorporated into Islam the time-honoured custom of annual pilgrimage to Mecca and to the shrine of the Kaaba, has breathed into Mohammed's religion a free-masonry and brotherhood of faith in spite of sectarian divisions. The eyes of the whole Moslem world fixed on that central spot, keep alive in the bosom of each some spark of the celestial fire which lighted up the earth in that century of darkness. Here, again, the wisdom of the inspired lawgiver shines forth in the negative part of the enactment, in the conditions necessary to make the injunction obligatory: (1) The ripeness of intelligence and discernment; (2) perfect freedom and liberty; (3) possession of the means of transport and subsistence during the journey; (4) possession of means sufficient to support the pilgrim's family during his absence; (5) the possibility and practicability of the voyage."

Pilgrim parties are a great feature of the Indian roads. In these days, the pilgrims have no hesitation in using the railroad or the motor-'bus, but the more old-fashioned stick to the country cart with its bullocks which jog along at a good old rate of two or two and a half miles an hour.

Generally the whole family, down to the youngest baby, takes to the road with everything movable they have in the world. Cooking pots, drinking vessels and sleeping mats are all that most require, but sometimes a string bed is carried for the old grandmother, who rules her children and grandchildren with an iron hand.

Nowadays Kim's friend, the old Indian officer, would hardly recognize the great thoroughfare he describes as "the Big Road." There are still, in many parts, the rough tracks on each side of the road, but the central road is no longer reserved for the sort of "quick traffic" he visualized.

Not only the Sahibs but the Indians themselves have forsaken the "rail carriages" and are travelling up and down the Grand Trunk Road in increasing numbers and in every form of motor vehicle. It is still a wonderful spectacle, bearing without crowding India's traffic for fifteen hundred miles—such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world.

"A still older marching route is represented now by the road from Calcutta to Madras, which skirts the eastern coast of India throughout practically the whole of its length and follows the line along which the old Coast Army moved and fought when the British Empire in India was still in the making. Shorter than either of these two trunk roads, but of hardly less historic interest, are the through routes from Bombay to Delhi passing through Agra, and the route from Bombay to Madras which runs through Poona, Belgaum, and Bangalore."

"Inside the rectangle formed by these four great roads there is an intricate network of roads of all kinds, ranging from the well-metalled and, on the whole, well-kept main roads which run from the provincial capitals in all directions throughout the different provinces, the less dependable roads which will carry wheeled traffic, including motor traffic, except when the rains are unduly severe, to the 'kacha,' or unmetalled roads, which vary from good motor roads in fine weather to miry or berutted tracks leading

from one obscure market town or overgrown village to another."

All over India mountains and hills, sandy deserts, innumerable watercourses which during the rains become raging torrents, and other physical difficulties put great obstacles in the way of road construction. Nevertheless the growth of roads progresses.

The development of motor transport, side by side with the existence of bullock-cart transport, has forced on the authorities the need for considering, first, how they can supersede water-bound macadam roads by other and more resistant highways, and, secondly, how to finance the developments which are now so desirable and necessary. A strong committee was formed by the Government of India two years ago to consider these problems, and is developing a co-ordinated policy of road construction.

Pilgrimages are always undertaken for some special purpose.

Some dire calamity threatens a devout Indian family, such as the severe illness of an only son, a pending lawsuit, sick cattle, or lack of rain. Paterfamilias goes to the village temple, just as a member of the Older Faith might go to his parish church, and registers a vow that if his son recovers, he wins his lawsuit, his cattle recover, or the longed-for rains appear, he will make a pilgrimage to one of the holy places mentioned in the last chapter.

The love of pilgrimages is in the air, and the Moslem takes the road with the Hindu whose faith he despises.

The belief in supernatural Beings whose influence can be obtained or warded off by various ceremonies, does not interfere with the belief of the Hindu in one supreme God, in whom are invested all ultimate powers. Similarly the Mussulman's firm belief that there is but one God, and that Mohammed is his Prophet, does not prevent him from believing that making his offerings in person at some holy place will obtain the intercession of the Saint on his behalf to secure a special blessing here on earth. "Thus both

Hindus and Mohammedans visit the shrine of Saiyad Salar, at Bahraich, if family quarrels cannot be settled or a wife bears her husband no children. The shrine of Shaik Saddo, at Amroha, in Moradabad, is resorted to for cures for diseases, and at Lucknow the assistance given by Shah Mina's dargah in legal questions is renowned. Appropriate gifts are offered at all of these shrines, a long embroidered flag for the first, a cock for the second, and a piece of cloth for the third. Further shrines of renown are those of Bahauddin Madar Shah, at Nakkanpur, in the Cawnpore district, and of Alauddin Sabir, at Piran Kaliar, in Saharanpur."

As might be expected, most Mohammedans of the lower and uneducated classes, although they are well grounded in the three cardinal doctrines of the Unity of God, the mission of Mohammed, and the truth of the Koran, are not a little infected with the Brahmanical mysticism which surrounds them and plays such a large part in the lives of their Hindu neighbours. In some districts they have a curious tradition that they are descended from Abel, while the Hindus owe their origin to Cain. The two sons of Adam are known to them by the Arabic names of Kabil and Habil, and they believe that Kabil killed Habil and dug a grave for him with a crow's beak!

To the Indian villagers, pilgrimages form not merely a religious outlet, but an attractive change from the dreary round of village life, and they are moreover to some extent educational.

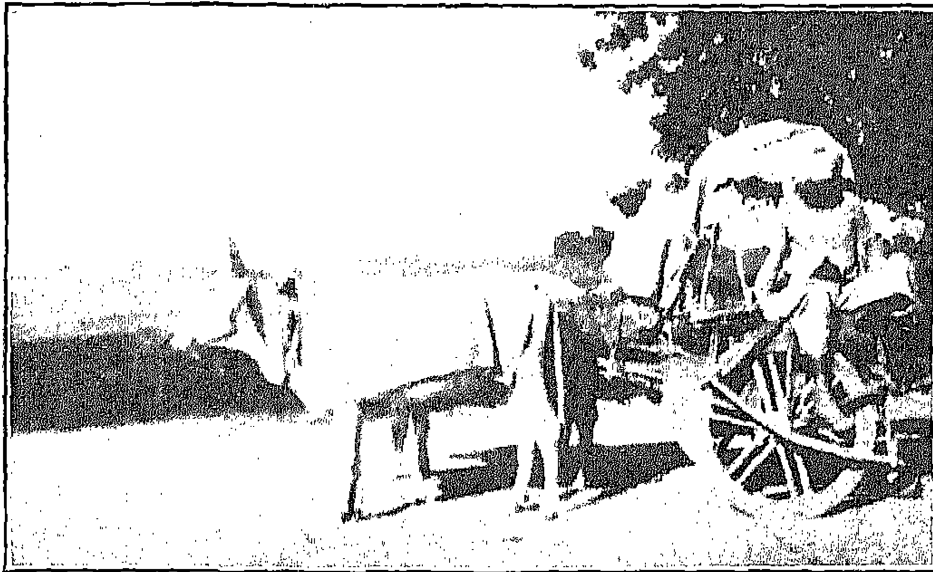
Every district and every temple of any importance has its own particular festival taking place at some fixed period in the year. These festivals are similar to those which occur throughout the world except in Persia—Persians being the only people amongst the nations of the world who have no regular feasts. There are something like eighteen feast-days in the Hindu religious calendar, but only a few need be mentioned in addition to the Feast of Lamps to which I have already referred.

About the 12th of January there is a festival called Makar Sankranti, to celebrate the entry of the sun into the Sign of Makar, or Capricorn, which is a lucky period of the year. At this feast devout Hindus bathe and rub themselves over with ground nut oil, and present pots full of the nuts to the Brahmans. They also celebrate the occasion by wearing new clothes and ornaments and distribute sweetmeats.

About a month later is a festival held in honour of Spring, and another called the Night of Shiva, when the god is worshipped by washing and purifying the *lingam*, covering it with a new cloth and presenting it with flowers. This "Night" is usually prolonged for three days.

The festival called the "Holi" occurs in March. I well remember taking part in this Saturnalia when I was the guest of a great Sikh prince. The Maharajah provided his guests with beautiful Indian dress, and our puggarees, or turbans, were tied by one of the royal valets. I quite fancied myself as a young Rajput and looked forward to retaining the outfit as a fancy dress. I little knew what I was in for, as the occasion is one permitting the wildest horseplay. As we drove through the city streets we were pelted with balls containing red powder, and from the house-tops the usually modest womenfolk emptied vessels containing evil-smelling fluids over us. Then we had to run the gauntlet of squirts of a red fluid, making our way through crowds of highly excited but perfectly good-tempered Hindus, who, as we were in Indian dress, treated us as co-religionists, and with scant consideration.

This was the Maharajah's joke, as he knew we would not see "the real sights" if we had gone in European dress. When we got back to the Palace His Highness was "playing Holi" with the same abandon as the rest of his subjects, and a curious experience ended up with a sort of football scrum, which ended by most of us, including the Prince, being pushed into a tank in the garden. My beautiful Indian kit was, of course, utterly ruined, and



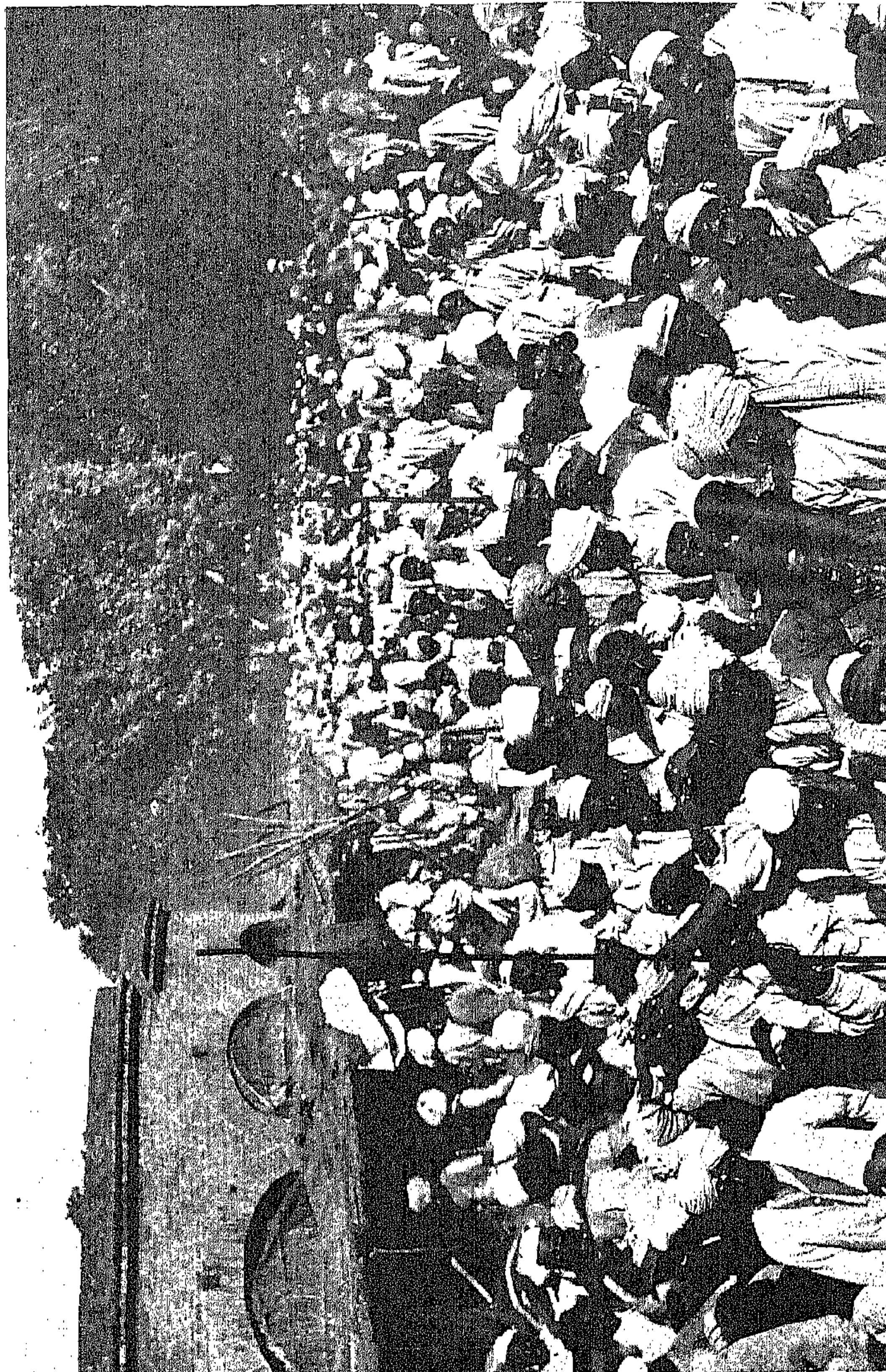
A Bullock Cart



[*Photos: Indian Trade Publicity Office*

A Camel Cart

Travelling in India



[*Photo: F. Deaville Walker*

INDIAN RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL ON THE BANKS OF THE SACRED GANGES

Face page 151]

so my ambition to pose as a Rajput at fancy dress balls was never realized.

A great festival to celebrate the anniversary of Krishna's birth is held in August at Gokul, which is situated on the banks of the Jumna about seven miles from Muttra, to which I refer elsewhere. The spot is famous as the place to which the infant Krishna was brought by his nurse and exchanged with the newly-born daughter of Jasoda, wife of Nanda, to save him from his uncle, the giant Kans, who threatened to kill him.

Near by at Mahaban is an interesting temple called the Palace of Nanda, the foster-father of the changeling Krishna, and here relics of the god's infancy are preserved, which are inspected with reverential awe by thousands of pilgrims year by year. The god's cradle, a rude structure covered in red calico and tinsel, stands in a pillared hall, and a blue-black statue of the sacred child stands under a canopy against the wall. One pillar of the temple is said to have been polished by the hand of Krishna's foster-mother Jasoda, as she leant against it whilst churning butter for the household, and the actual churn she used is shown, consisting of a long bamboo sticking out of a carved stone! Other pillars have been equally polished by the pious hands of the streams of Vishnu worshippers who have passed through the hall all down the ages. The temple guides point out a spot on the wall where the sportive milkmaids are said to have hidden Krishna's flute, but if you find one in a communicative mood, he will tell you that the old temple was destroyed and re-erected by Auranzebe from ancient Hindu and Buddhist materials, to serve as a mosque!

In the month of September, at the time of the new moon, there is a festival in honour of the wife of Shiva which is specially dedicated to the household gods as represented by tools of the artisan and agricultural implements of the farmer. The farmer sets up his plough and his spade in a place carefully purified by a layer of cow-dung, and prostrates himself before them. "The mason offers similar

homage to his trowel and his square; the carpenter to his axe, his saw and his plane; the barber to his razor, the writer to his pen, the tailor to his scissors and needles; the fisherman to his nets, the weaver to his loom, the butcher to his cleaver; and so on in the case of all the craftsmen." The women are not left out of this ceremonial, as they collect their baskets, rice-mills and cooking utensils, and do *puja* to them.

The great feast of Ganesh is held on the fourth of September, and on this occasion Hindus consider it very unlucky to look at the moon. If by accident, they should get a glimpse of it, they believe that the only way to avert the anger of the god of Good Luck is to induce their neighbours to abuse them.

Perhaps the greatest of all the feasts is the Dasara, which is held on the 10th of October in honour of Kali, the goddess. This is essentially the Soldiers' Festival, and in the olden days the warriors piled their arms, which were sprinkled with holy water, and paid homage to them. On these occasions, in the Indian states it is customary for the ruling prince to give entertainments which attract great crowds.

In Bengal this festival is known as the Durga Puja, and is the great holiday of the year, shared by Christian, Mussulman and Hindu alike.

In Kashmir, during the Vasanta Panchami, or Spring feast, all who can do so appear in a yellow robe, as yellow is believed to be a colour particularly acceptable in the sight of the gods in springtime. At this period the Rajputs give themselves up to even greater licence than usual in relation to food and drink, and even the most sedate people burst into song in public in testimony to their praise of nature. This Spring festival is specially honoured by the forest tribes of Assam. Colonel Dalton, in his description of this holiday, says: "It is as gay as a carnival, and while it lasts the women, especially the maidens, enjoy unusual liberty. For many days before the actual festival, the young people in the villages may be seen moving about in

groups, gaily dressed, or forming circles, in the midst of which the prettiest girls dance with their long hair loose on their shoulders. The first day of the festival is devoted to interchanges of visits, the next to the bathing and worshipping of all the cattle, and on the third day the inhabitants of several groups of villages, old and young, meet at some appointed place, and give themselves up to thorough enjoyment. The girls on these occasions do not like to dance before the men of their own village."

As befits a reforming creed, the festivals of Islam are of a more seriously-minded character than those of the fanciful and mystical Hindu. They celebrate incidents in the life of the Prophet or his family, or great events in their religious history.

The Mohorram, which gave an opportunity to Lalun's friends, is a period of mourning in remembrance of the death of Husain, the son of Ali, by Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed. Like the Ramazan, it is a fast, but lasts only for ten days. On the night of the seventh day an image of Burak, the animal on which Mohammed is popularly supposed to have been carried into Heaven, and on the tenth day tazias, or biers, are carried through the streets, which represent the funeral procession of Ali. These biers are thrown into the sea, if possible, or into a river or tank, but where these are not available they are buried in the earth. Although the poisoning of Hasan and the murder of Husain occurred in the seventh century, the mourners are moved to great depths of feeling, and beat their breasts and cry out "Ya! Hasan! Ya! Husain!" or "Ya! Ali!"

At this period, as Lalun's friends well knew, religious enthusiasm reaches a stage of fanaticism, and disturbances between the Mohammedans and their Hindu fellow-subjects are apt to occur. Those who smile at such incidents forget that in Ulster to this day the celebration of the Battle of the Boyne on the 12th of July is just as liable to cause disturbance between the Orangemen and their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects with whom they live happily during the rest of the year.

There are two festivals connected with the last illness of the Prophet; one is held to celebrate the occasion on which Mohammed recovered a little and bathed for the last time. This takes place about the last Wednesday of February, and pious Moslems write out seven blessings, wash off the ink and drink it, and also bathe and repeat prayers. The other is the Barah Wafat, or Great Death, occurs in March and is held in memory of Mohammed's death.

The Shab-i-barat, or Night of Record, is a festival peculiar to India. It is celebrated with fireworks, a symbol which is difficult to understand, as the occasion is, like the other Moslem celebrations, a very solemn one, as on this day men's deeds and actions are measured and rewards and punishments allotted accordingly. The Koran should be read all night, and the following day a fast should be observed.

The Bakar Id is held in memory of Abraham's offering of Ishmael as described in the Koran, and all sorts of animals are sacrificed.

The only really cheery Moslem festival is the Id-ul-Fitr, the day when the fast of Ramazan is broken. Like our Easter, the festival is spent in rejoicing.

From earliest times fairs have always been held in connection with great religious festivals. The Greeks utilised their religious games for trading purposes, and the Romans also traded during their annual feasts. This custom was carried out in our own country, where a law had to be passed in the time of Edward I, to prohibit fairs and markets being held in churchyards.

In days when means of communication were few, fairs were of great importance in Europe, but with the advance of civilization their importance is passing away.

The Indian fair, or *mela* as it is called in the vernacular, is an extremely interesting sight. It usually centres round a temple, and traders assemble from far and wide. Their booths are laden with every variety of objects of piety, utility and ornament—images of the gods, looking-glasses and combs. The Indians are very fond of sweets, and

many tons of innumerable varieties are sold at all the great fairs. Some sweets have a particular season, and others are connected with certain festivals. The sweet-seller's stall is always one of the most popular everywhere in India, and his customers are not merely children, but grown ups. He shows marvellous ingenuity in mixing sugar with all kinds of nuts and other substances, and no European confectioner can beat him in devising new kinds of candies. A favourite sweetmeat consists of lollipops, threaded on string like necklaces.

Garlands are a great feature of the Indian *mela*, especially in Western India. They are prepared in endless varieties. Those presented to the gods are mostly rather poor productions, costing only a halfpenny or thereabouts. But on the departure of a Government official for England, or for the bride and bridegroom at an important wedding, the garlands are made into magnificent productions, with gold and silver thread, and sometimes small looking-glasses, interspersed amongst the flowers.

At the Hindu festivals the religious duties of the worshippers are not exacting. They enter the temple, make a small offering to the priest, pay their *puja* to the god, and forthwith immerse themselves in the pleasures of the fair—merry-go-rounds, food-stalls and side-shows.

The holy men of all the religious Orders, whom I have referred to in a previous chapter, form a prominent feature in these fairs, and from afar their saffron robes make a picturesque sight. They do not, however, bear close inspection, as their bodies, smeared with ashes or mud, their hair matted and unkempt, and their lips stained blood-red from chewing betel-nut, are repellent to Western eyes. Not so, however, to those of our Indian fellow-subjects, who treat them with the same reverence and respect which was accorded to the wandering Christian friars by our forefathers.

If the importance of the fair has passed away in Europe, there is no sign of its popularity dwindling in India.

CHAPTER XV

CRIME AND CRIMINALS

"There *have* been occasions, but that long ago,
Though I was a Crim—yes, I was a Crim—
I would have done better, and tried it, but no—
They'd marked me the criminal kind.

They hunted me, haunted me, hounded me ever,
For I was a Crim—yes, I was a Crim!
My honest intentions accepted they? Never!
I was branded the criminal kind.

So I gave up the struggle and threw in my lot,
For I was a Crim—yes, I was a Crim!
With the worst of my fellows, 'gainst 'justice' we fought,
Being classed as the criminal kind.

The Salvation Army now comes to our aid,
With work for the Crim—yes, work for the Crim!
And for us a pathway to Heaven has made
For tribes of the criminal kind.

With a chance in the world, and a friend to stand by
Not so bad is the Crim, not so bad is the Crim!
He'll respond to the message of kindness and why!
Love's the key to the criminal mind."

REVIEWING J. C. Curry's recently published book, *The Indian Police*, Mr. T. Earle Welby says: "The fundamental difference between police work in India and police work here is probably unknown to one in a hundred of the British public. It can be stated very simply. With us, the police

are conceived of as the servants of the whole community, and are co-operated with and criticized always on that assumption. In India, at any rate as regards the vast majority of the people, the police are conceived of as the agents of a wholly external authority, the *Sirkar*, the Government.

"Glib apologists for the mendacious and shameful criticism to which the Indian police have periodically been subjected in most of the Indian Legislatures and in the greater part of the Indian-owned Press must not here retort that all is explained by the Government being alien. There is hardly an area of any size within what now constitutes British India which was not before the advent of the British ruled periodically or permanently by aliens. The explanation is not that the Indian police is ultimately under British direction, but that at least ninety per cent of the Indian population regard the prevention, detection and punishment of nearly all forms of crime as lying wholly within the province of the Government, however that Government may be constitutionally or ethnically constituted."

Few who have experience of India will disagree with this estimate of the attitude of the Indian mind towards crime and its prevention and even the most biased admirers of the country must admit that Indian society contains many potentially criminal elements which need only opportunity to come to the fore. Most villages have their *badmashes*, i.e. bad characters, who are known to turn their hand to theft, burglary, and even more serious crimes when circumstances permit.

A good deal of the crime against the person in India is the result of the primitive social state of the mass of the people and the observance of semi-barbarous cults and traditions handed down from the past, and often based upon primitive tribal instincts of self-preservation, but which now under British rule are illegal and criminal.

"Many such practices which nowadays under British rule are crimes were not deemed to be such under Hindu and

Mohammedan rule. Instances of these are the burning of widows alive on the funeral pyre; female infanticide; burial of lepers alive; 'justifiable suicide'; condonable murder or manslaughter; and avenging certain wrongs, e.g. adultery, by taking the law into one's own hands. In ancient India the avenging of all criminal justice remained in the hands of those who were wronged; and still to the present day it is not fully recognized that the enactments under British rule have diminished the sphere of private revenge. *Mutilation* of nearly every part of the body was authorized as a punishment in ancient Hindu law." Indeed amputation of the limbs and chopping off the ears, or the nose, breaking the teeth, and even "piercing or gouging out the eyes, were specified punishments. *Burial alive* was a recognized Mohammedan torture, and Hindu sacrifice is still sometimes practised even nowadays. *Torture* is still believed to be often resorted to clandestinely by the police to extract evidence, and trial by ordeal is still not infrequent."

In the Vedas the crime of manslaughter "was condoned on payment of the price or blood-money termed *Vaira*, payable to the relatives of the man killed. The scale of payment prescribed was 1,000 cows for a person of the Ksatriya caste, 100 for Vaisya, and 10 for a Sudra; and over and above this was in each case a bull which it is supposed was the perquisite of the king for his judicial intervention. The crime of slaying a Brahman was too heinous for a fine. It was a sin which could only be expiated by the performance of a horse-sacrifice (*Asvamedha*), the *ne plus ultra* of generosity to Brahmins. In this sacrifice the human victims seem to have included not only the plaintiff and defendant but also the arbitrator."

"Five kinds of suicide are considered justifiable by Hindus: It is written in the *Brahma Purana*: 'Let the man who is afflicted with a grievous and uncurable disease enter a burning fire, or procure his death by starvation, or by plunging into unfathomable waters, or by precipitating himself from an eminence, or by ascending to paradise by a

respectful pilgrimage to the Himalaya Mountains. Whoever relinquishes life under these circumstances, by precipitating himself from the sacred *vista* tree at Prayaga, or, his time being come, destroys himself, that high-minded person shall receive a great reward in a future state, and shall not be considered a suicide; even although he might have been a great sinner, he shall meet with supreme bliss in paradise. The privilege of practising the above-named austerities is extended to the human species in general, without restriction either in regard to sex or tribe."

The Indian criminals are perhaps, broadly speaking, of a somewhat milder and less vicious type than the average criminal in Europe. There are relatively fewer of that gross, anti-social type of moral monster who infests society under the stress of our higher civilization. The great majority of violent criminals and murderers in India are "*criminals by passion*," fairly well-meaning and generally law-abiding men, who, stung into sudden madness by some insult or wrong, real or fancied, to themselves or families, take justice or retaliation into their own hands, and so find themselves in the clutches of the Law. A large number are criminal through natural stupidity and want of self-control, rather than inherent wickedness.

Apart however from individuals, who like many people in Western lands have a criminal kink, it is not generally known that widespread over the whole Indian Empire there are numerous tribes who regard larceny, burglary, and even murder as their legitimate trade.

They constitute a caste in themselves and their occupation is handed down from father to son, like any other Indian trade. They take a great pride in their profession, and attain great skill in their "craft," and in certain tribes there are laws which show very plainly that they do not consider a man to be worth his salt unless he has proved himself an expert thief.

Like the European gypsies of former days, the criminal tribes live apart from the general community and have

laws and a social system of their own. They are outlaws in the true sense of the word, and they look upon the rest of society as a group of beings from whom they can wrest a living by cunning or by brute force without any qualms of conscience.

Miss Edwards says there seems to be no doubt that among certain tribes a man is required every year to prove to his tribe-fellows that he has committed some definite act of robbery; while in another tribe the custom seems to be that no self-respecting woman of the tribe will marry a man until he has committed two or three successful robberies as a proof of his fitness to support a wife and family.

Some tribes own land, and have their regular place in the village community, but the men have a suspicious way of disappearing for weeks or months at a time, and the post office records often show that money orders of considerable value, and a large number of registered parcels containing valuables, are transmitted to their wives and families during their absence. Other tribes lead a wandering gypsy life, camping in a certain district, and committing thefts and depredations until the fear of the police compels them to move on. Yet another group pose, sometimes for years, as respectable merchants, keeping a shop in some large town, and going off with their associates on tours for robbery in another part of the country where they are not known.

Amongst the wandering tribes is a community which has developed from the donkey men and carriers of olden times, who used to carry grain to the coast and salt inland.

They lost their occupation with the advent of the roads and railways, and took to thieving as an alternative trade. With other tribes the growth of the railways has facilitated their operations. For example, a tribe in Rajputana can come up into the Punjab, commit a dozen burglaries and be back in Rajputana within a week, leaving no trace of identity behind them.

The habits of the people are almost an inducement to burglary and housebreaking with violence, which is known

in India as *dacoity*. The Indian peasants and also members of the professional and landed classes do not as a rule bank their savings. They put them, in the form of jewellery, on their wives or bury them in hard cash in secret places in their houses. Their dishonest countrymen have rough and ready methods of finding these hiding-places, and for the unfortunate victims a burglary is often what the failure of a bank is to a middle-class Englishman.

The old marauding spirit still exists in some parts of the country and even men of good families of the "squireen" type are frequently found as leaders of robber gangs.

Indeed, writing comparatively recently, Colonel Waddell says that "in Burma, a short spell of dacoity, that is organized robbery with assault and even murder, is still fashionable amongst the youth of that country to prove their daring and manhood to their sweethearts, and is thus from its audacious motive to be distinguished from ordinary crime, though it might be classed with professional crime."

A curious group are the Chapparbands, or Hut-Builders, whose name, along with their physical characteristics, confirms the tradition that they came south as hangers-on and hut-builders to the Mohammedan armies. Whether by accident or by design, it is hard to tell, but when the tide of Mohammedan conquest receded northwards the Chapparbands were left high and dry on the shores of a Hindu civilization, which had no place for them. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that they, feeling themselves to be outsiders, they took to a trade which preyed upon that civilization which would not make use of their gifts. They appear to have developed a taste for imitating the work of the Indian Mint and have become expert in the art of counterfeiting the coin of the Realm.

No two criminal tribes seem to work alike. Each one has its own laws and methods of procedure. There is, for instance, the tribe who call themselves "the Bundle-Stealers." These people frequent bazaars and fairs, travel in crowded third-class carriages, hang about railway stations,

and are extraordinarily clever at evading the police. They disguise themselves as respectable travellers, and pass the stolen property so quickly from hand to hand that the actual thief is very rarely caught with his booty on him. The Indian traveller's luggage very often consists of a bundle or a canvas bag, which he stows under his seat, and the wily thief, after having impressed the whole carriage-full of people by his big talk of his shop in Bombay, or his farm in the country, unselfishly offers when night comes to sleep on the floor, so as to give more room to his fellow travellers. Once there, he quickly rifles all the bags and bundles, and passes the valuables to an equally respectable-looking thief, who gets out at the next station. He himself gets out soon after, and it is not generally until morning that the thefts are discovered, and by that time the thieves are far away, and there is very little hope of catching them.

As an example of the methods pursued by the Chapparbands in passing base metal for gold, Miss Edwards tells the following story on police authority; A Chapparband prepared an alloy of tin and copper, and made it look like an ingot of gold. He then dropped it on the road and lurked close by. Presently an unsuspecting peasant came by, and picking up the ingot proceeded with great joy to tuck it into his pouch. The Chapparband then sprang out of his hiding place and demanded a share of the treasure. The peasant refusing, he threatened him with the police, but finally, with a show of great magnanimity, consented to allow his victim to keep the gold, and to accept the comparatively small sum of ten rupees instead of his share. The unfortunate peasant hurried home congratulating himself on his luck, and was only disillusioned when he presented the ingot for sale to a goldsmith!

To show the sense of humour and pride displayed by these tribesmen, there is an amusing story told of a newly-appointed officer of the Indian Civil Service, who was approached by one of the tribes asking him to appoint one of them as watchman.

"If you will appoint him at a salary of so much a month," said they, "we, as a tribe, will guarantee the immunity of your house from robbery." "This," said the civil servant, "is blackmail, I can protect my own property," and he dismissed them from his presence without further thought.

That night, it being hot weather, he slept upon a tree outside his bungalow, and in the morning a strange sight met his astonished eyes. On the trees of his compound hung all his pictures and hunting trophies, and his clothes were tastefully draped upon the bushes! Table and chairs were grouped on the path, and the papers and other contents of his locked writing-bureau were neatly ranged in packets around his little grass plot, and each stamp from his stamp box had been licked and stuck on a separate leaf of the tree under which he had been asleep. The bungalow had been entirely stripped of its contents, but not a thing was missing. History does not relate what the civil servant said, or what he did next.

The problem of dealing with people capable of exploits of this kind, and with an outlook which binds them to their fellow-tribesmen by every law of heredity and self-interest, is obviously far more serious than any which the guardians of the King's Peace have to face in this country.

In other lands criminals are individuals who may be described as the "rogue elephants" of society. They are branded, boycotted and segregated from the decent law-abiding members of the human race. In India they consist of entire Tribes, Villages, Clans, and Families, all the members of which are devoted from the cradle to the grave to a life of crime. Nor are they ashamed of their profession; rather do they glory in it, and regard themselves with all the pride of ancestry of warriors engaged in a perfectly legitimate war against society.

These men are truly Ishmaelites, as their hands are against every man and every man's hands against them. Their only friends in the Hindu social system are the

receivers of stolen goods, who encourage them in their nefarious practices.

It was no Indian social reformer but a great Englishman, Sir John Hewitt, who first attempted to reclaim these tribes.

He made over to the Salvation Army a tribe called Doms and promised that if the labours of the Army were successful other tribes would be committed to their charge.

The people who were subjected to this experiment were confined at night in a kind of walled prison enclosure, where men, women and children were locked in. During the day they were allowed to go into the city, where many of them were employed, and paid, as city scavengers and road-sweepers. They also begged food from the people for whom they did odd jobs. It was well known that they added largely to their income by robbery and other crime. They were further notorious for drink, gambling and immorality.

They were indeed unpromising material and such inveterate gamblers, that when a Dom died they would put a few pice into the hand of the dead man with which to commence gambling in the world to come. Their idea of Paradise was a land where they could gamble to their hearts' content, with no police to check them.

The experiment was a success and other tribes were handed over to the Army. Here is a description of one of them. Their appearance was miserable in the extreme. The scanty scraps of clothing they possessed were ragged and dirty, and they themselves were little more than skin and bones. In the middle of the night, about two a.m., they would get up, and fill the air with their lamentations and howls. They had a theory that one of their ancestors had incurred the wrath of a certain demon by killing a rabbit to appease his hunger. *They might eat jackals, lizards and serpents—almost anything—but a rabbit they must never touch.* Now they were suffering for their ancestor's dis-

obedience. And so every night for about an hour they would howl their regrets and beg forgiveness.

Soon after their arrival the police reported that all the jackals in the neighbourhood had disappeared, for they were expert hunters and looked upon jackal flesh as quite a delicacy. But they had not been many months in their new location when regular work and good food had made a revolution in their tastes as well as in their appearance, and the jackals began to reappear!

The success which has attended the work of the Army and other bodies such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts has been simply amazing.

The Salvation Army alone is now responsible for thirty-five settlements in various provinces, a large proportion of their work lying in the United Provinces, the Punjab, and Madras. They have altogether in their settlements over 8,000 persons.

The settlements which these great missionary bodies have established are not charitable institutions where the inmates are maintained in idleness. They are places where erstwhile criminals maintain themselves by honest industry.

Considering that the tribesmen and women were originally filthy outcasts living on vermin, clothed with the minimum quantity of loathsome rags and practising demonolatry with abominable rites, it is wonderful to read in one of the leading Indian newspapers that the settlements are not merely weaning the tribespeople from crime, but are making them models of well conducted life, skilled artisans, educated, accustomed to observe sound social and hygienic rules which make them happy and healthy patterns to many of those who in the past suffered from their malpractices.

The intelligent attitude of the settlement officers is to uphold the tribal laws and gradually raise their tone.

Sexual relations are, needless to say, one of the great problems. Some of the tribes have no morals to speak of, whilst others, for instance, the Haran Shikaris, are strictly moral, but have most inconvenient marriage laws. The

Haran Shikari girl is always married by exchange, that is, her brother expects to marry her husband's sister. Great wrath was occasioned once by a Haran Shikari girl who ran off with a man whose only sister was an infant. The girl's two grown-up brothers were deeply injured by her thoughtless conduct.

The sympathy and understanding with which cultured Englishwomen devote their lives to the rescue of the wayward women of these tribes is beyond praise.

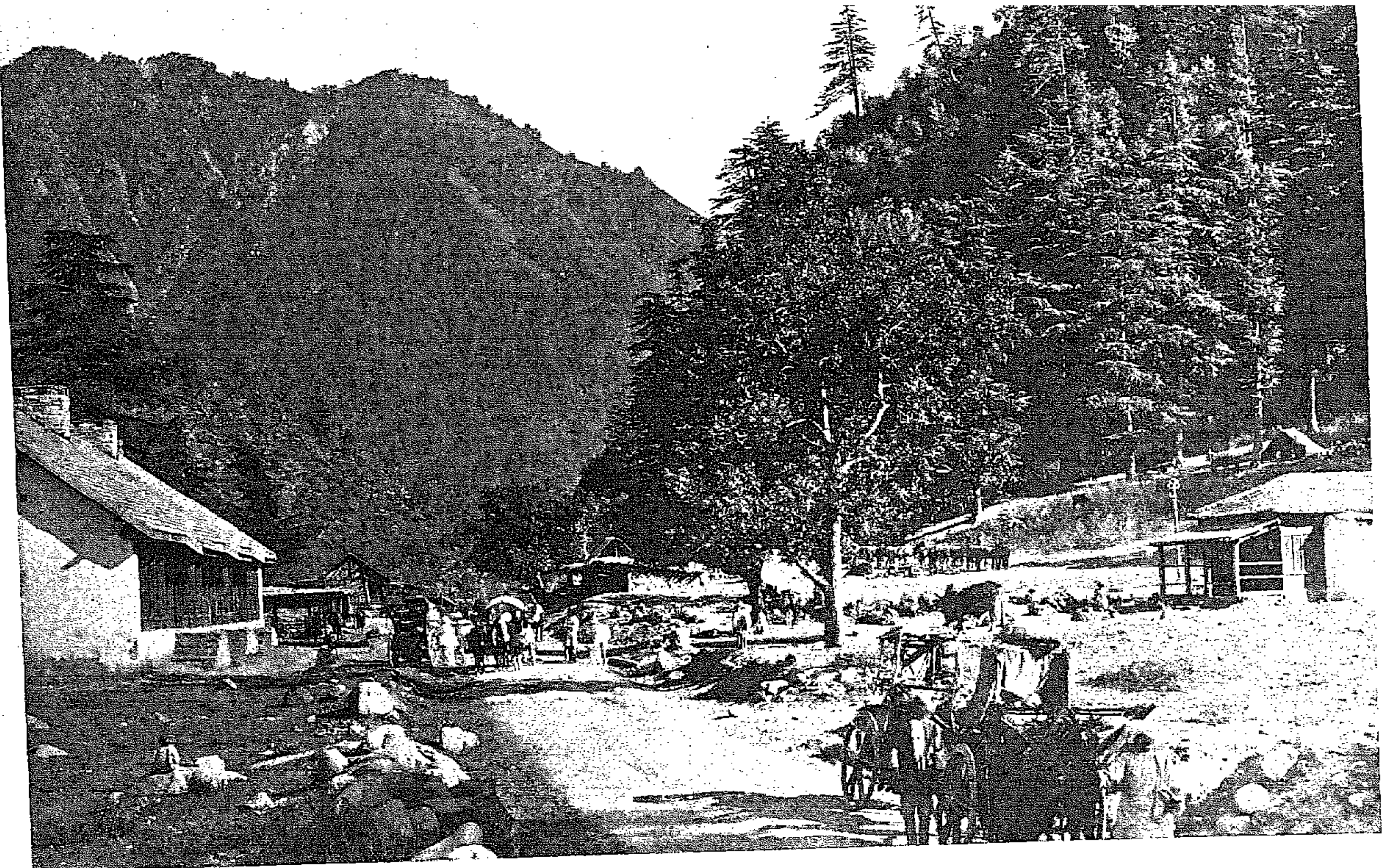
Those who wish to get an insight into this work should read the little booklet by Miss C. M. Edwards, from which I have freely quoted in this chapter.

"The difficulty of unravelling the tangled skeins of evidence in criminal cases in India is notorious, and has been lucidly brought to public notice by Sir Cecil Walsh in his recent work, *Indian Village Crimes*. In his Introduction the author expresses the opinion that a good deal of such difficulties, and occasional unfairness towards accused persons, would be removed if the latter were allowed, as they are in England, to give evidence on their own behalf, and he says he is satisfied that it is the most pressing reform needed to-day in Criminal Law in India. He further claims that, though the legal profession seems to be against it, there is a strong body of judicial and expert opinion in favour of the proposal."

Those who wish to pursue the subject should consult Sir Cecil Walsh's book, *Crime in India*, published in 1930.

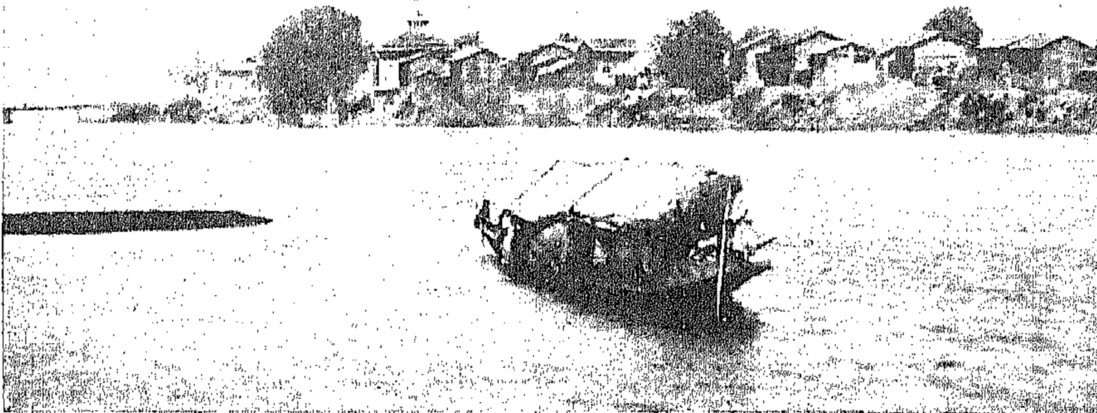
I cannot do better than close this chapter by quoting a story which Sir Cecil tells of the way in which an Indian youth employed the Criminal Law to obtain money for his amusements.

"There was a youth, whose father left a substantial estate. The boy was a minor and a ward. In the ordinary way an Indian arrives at his majority at eighteen, but if a guardian has been appointed he has to wait till he is twenty-one. His estate is tied up under the orders of the District Judge, and applications have to be made in court for any special



An Indian Country Road

[*Face page* 166



THE HAPPY VALLEY
Doonga and Village with Snow-clad Peaks in the distance



THE HAPPY VALLEY
Srinagar: The Venice of Northern India

Face page 167]

allowances beyond the ordinary sum for maintenance. The ordinary Indian youth is precocious, and at fourteen much ahead of his Western contemporary. This youth was inclined to enjoy life, and wanted to spend money in visiting towns and in seeking various forms of amusement. But he lacked the necessary cash. He or his lawyer, therefore, conceived the ingenious plan of getting friends to run false cases against him for all sorts of imaginary offences. This necessitated his attendance at court and a supply of money for his journeys, costs, and incidental expenses, and the customary applications were made to the unwitting District Judge. But there was the risk that this ground of application would become exhausted. So they arranged a continual succession of adjournments, a perfectly simple matter with the majority of magistrates, by whom ordinary cases of assault are constantly adjourned, month after month, on some pretext or other, which is often one for the purpose of annoying the defendant and prolonging the agony. The adjournments, over which the District Judge had no control, necessitated fresh applications for money, and the young man was able to keep going with enough money for his escapades for a long time, until, it is said, one magistrate unfortunately made the serious mistake of convicting the youth, who was at great pains and expense to get the conviction set aside."

CHAPTER XVI

THUGS OF TO-DAY

> "I am one, my liege,
> Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
> Have so incensed, that I am reckless what
> I do to spite the world."
>
> MACBETH.

THE Borgias attained unhappy renown in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are said to have reduced poisoning to a fine art. They have modern successors in India as skilful as they were in the nefarious practice of poisoning unsuspecting victims.

Familiarity with the action of narcotics, which has arisen from the daily habits of opium-eating and hemp-smoking, readily accounts for the prevalence of the crime of secret poisoning which from early times has been especially ascribed to the East as the favourite means employed by assassins to remove objectionable persons and take life, and certainly at the present day poisoning is very much more common in India and the East generally than in Europe.

Poisons were, doubtless, early discovered by primitive man, who by experience or accident must soon have learned to avoid them himself and to use them against his enemies or game. Indeed, the classic term "Toxicology" is derived from the Greek word for "an arrow or missile for the bow," which would indicate that the earlier use of poison was to smear over arrows used in sport or warfare. The ancient Indian scriptures contain references to the poisoning of kings, to the deeds of professional poisoners, and to the existence of widespread organized poisoning in almost pre-

historic times. In one of the *Shastras* it is written: "It is necessary for the practitioner to have a knowledge of the symptoms of the different poisons and their antidotes, as the enemies of the king, bad women and ungrateful servants, mix poison with food." Susruta, the Indian Hippocrates, describes several modes of poisoning in ancient India. He tells us that poisons were administered with food and beverages, inhaled in snuff and applied externally in bathing water, anointing oils, perfumes and eyelash pigments. Some were so effective that they had only to be sprinkled over clothes, beds, garlands and saddles, whilst there was even jewellery which was used as a medium for inoculating with secret poisons. He refers to the prescription of poisonous draughts as love-charms, and gives details of the fiendish practice of poisoning of wells and other drinking water to destroy enemies.

The *Mahabharata*, which, as we have seen, is ascribed to the fifth or sixth century before our era, mentions that Bhim Sen, the Hindu Samson, was poisoned by his cousin in revenge for having defeated his enemy in a duel. In a semi-historical legend of Buddhist times, it is related that the grandfather of Asoka, Chandra Gupta, the founder of the Maurya dynasty, sent to his contemporary, Alexander the Great, in the guise of a present, a fascinating girl who was a "poison-maiden" fed on poison until she was so saturated with venom that her embrace proved fatal. The mere conception of such a Borgia-like siren implies considerable familiarity with the gentle art of poisoning.

Strabo relates that the custom of burning Hindu widows alive on the death of their husbands, referred to in a later chapter, was introduced as a check against the prevailing custom of Hindu wives poisoning their husbands, so that the wives would thus have no an interest in not being privy to the premature death of their lords.

In Mohammedan times, poisoning was a recognized form of capital punishment, and was unusually rife in harem intrigues and against political foes and prisoners.

Tavernier, in describing his visit to Gwalior Fort, then used as a great state prison of the Mohammedans, writes: "When Aurungzebe sends any great lord to this place, at the end of nine or ten days he orders him to be poisoned; and this he does that the people may not exclaim against him for a bloody prince!" It seems that this abominable method of dealing with prisoners was pretty general in the seventeenth century in India. For magical and mystic purposes without intent to actually kill, a good deal of what may be called "accidental" poisoning goes on in many country districts.

The Law of Manu laid down a penalty for employing poisonous roots, charms, or witchcraft with intent to kill, and a Brahman who employed poison was degraded to the rank of Vaisya.

The Hindu legends bristle with references to poisons.

Shiva was intoxicated, we are told, by drinking deadly drugs, and his neck became blue from drinking the deadly poison produced at the churning of the ocean, by which he saved the world from destruction.

Indian history conveys the impression that the ancient kings of Hindustan lived in constant dread of poisoning.

Some of them sought to acquire a tolerance against poisons and Mahmud Beyadu, who was king of Ahmedabad in the latter half of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, is said to have fed on poison.

"His father," Barbosa tells us, "desired that he should be brought up from a child and nourished with poison, in order that it should not be possible to kill him with poison; for the Moorish kings of those parts often have one another killed with poison . . . for which cause he became so poisonous that if a fly settled on his hand, it swelled and immediately fell dead."

He must have been a very dangerous person to live with, as a contemporary chronicler relates that if he only breathed on one of his many wives she died forthwith!

Mahmud of Ghazni, the founder of the Pathan dynasty,

was as ruthless as the Borgias, as he got rid of whole gangs of robbers by poisoning apples, and such-like, by the camel load.

Shah Jahan, great prince and builder as he was, relieved himself of the presence of a troublesome courtier by giving him poisoned betel nut in open durbar.

Bernier, who was physician to Aurungzebe for eight years, gives curious accounts of poisoning at the Indian Courts which read like modern "thrillers."

In view of the respect for animal life which is so dominant a feature of Indian life, it is surprising to find the poisoning of horses and cattle prevalent at certain times and in certain districts and areas, not as agrarian outrage, but simply for the sake of their hides!

It is almost unbelievable to find the familiar jequirity, or Indian liquorice plant, used for this fiendish purpose. Though quite harmless when swallowed, the juice of all parts of the plant if injected under the skin of an animal produces a lesion similar to snake vemon and rapidly proves fatal. The low-caste leather workers who carry out these crimes, pound the decorticated seeds into a paste with water and make the mass into small sharp-pointed spikes or "needles" which they harden in the sun. When used, two of the spikes, which are about three-quarters of an inch in length, are inserted into holes in a wooden handle by their base. A blow is then struck with great force, driving the spike protruding from the handle into the animal's flesh, where it is left, and causes death within eighteen to twenty-four hours.

The liquorice needles are not always used for killing mere cattle, and one of the most puzzling cases which came under my own observation, was the murder of a man by a jealous woman by the use of one of the mysterious little spikes coated with liquorice juice.

It has been remarked that an interesting book might be written on the crimes in India which have been "repressed," only to appear again in some novel form. This is the case

with Thuggee, which, when put down by General Sleeman and the officers who worked with him, has appeared again in the form of Road Poisoning.

The Thugs were a body of criminals who acted, or said they acted, under the protection of the great goddess Kali, but the most extraordinary aspect of Thuggee was its ability to bind Hindu and Moslem together. In the words of a classic on the subject:

"Strange, too, that Hindu and Moslem of every sect and denomination should join with one accord in the superstition from which this horrible trade has arisen. In the Hindu, perhaps, it is not to be wondered at, as the goddess who protects him is one whom all castes regard with reverence and hold in the utmost dread; but as for the Moslem, unless his conduct springs from that terrible doctrine of Fatalism, with which every true believer is thoroughly imbued from the first dawn of his reason, it is difficult to assign a reason for the horrible pursuit he has engaged in."

My kinsman, John Heron Lepper, in his intensely interesting book, *Famous Secret Societies*, recently published, gives a very complete account of the Fraternity. There was a secret ceremony of initiation, and the Thugs had means of recognizing each other under all circumstances. They strangled their victims with a handkerchief, cord or strap, and the innocent-looking weapon of their trade and the sacred pickaxe used in digging the graves of the unfortunate wretches who came into their power were blessed by priests, who received a large share of the plunder. Great dexterity was acquired by Bhuttotes, or expert Thugs. Once the necessary knack had been acquired, the victim's neck could be broken in a very few seconds.

I regret to say that the Thugs who used the strap are said to have been originally trained by an Irish soldier named Creagh, and I well remember that Sir O'Moore Creagh, the distinguished wearer of the Victoria Cross who

was Commander-in-Chief when I was at Simla, used to jokingly claim descent from this blackguard.

"The Thugs were divided into certain classes, each having special duties. The province of a Sotha was to act as a decoy to induce travellers to join up with the band of Thugs, so that at the first convenient opportunity they might be strangled and robbed in safety. To the Lugha was entrusted the task of preparing the *bhil*, or grave, in which the victims were to be concealed after death. The usual procedure was for the Lughas to go in advance of the party and prepare this grave at a suitable spot, so that the victims could be despatched and interred with the least possible delay and inconvenience. The Shumshea acted as executioner's assistant, and had to distract the attention of the victim at the proper moment, so that the Bhuttote could place the *roomal*, or noose, round his neck without hindrance."

Great importance was attached by Thugs to signs and omens before setting out on an expedition. "The twittering of a tree-owl or the braying of an ass would be favourable signs; whereas a hare crossing the path was a very bad one. The bark of a jackal was, however, the worst of all omens, and an orthodox Thug would at once have abandoned any enterprise that was heralded by such a presage. To hear a crow call while flying was enough to make a band give up an expedition and return home."

The Commission of Thuggee and Dacoity was still in existence when I went to India in the 'nineties, and survived into the present century, but it was then generally recognized that the Thug had resorted to another weapon than the *roomal*, or handkerchief. Even before they were suppressed, James Forbes was of opinion that the expert and daring Thug used the handkerchief, and the more timid practitioners employed poison, and Dr. Chevers, the famous authority on Indian medical jurisprudence, confirms this view by asserting that when the Government started

its campaign of suppression the Thugs abandoned strangling and took to drugs.

Be this as it may, the methods of the modern Road Poisoner closely resemble those of the Thug.

He generally hunts his game in small groups consisting of his own family or a few accomplices. As often as not, he carries out his operations alone. He frequently masquerades as a religious mendicant, or as a Brahman cook from whose hands any traveller, Hindu or Mussulman, may eat.

At other times he poses as a pilgrim tout or as a marriage agent in search of a bride. He attaches himself to a band of dancing girls, or hangs on to a party of Kabuli horse-dealers with a string of horses brought down to India for sale.

He wins the confidence of his victims and carefully isolates a suitable group. The scene of his attack is a *serai*, or native inn, or the vicinity of a railway station. He obtains a commission to procure or cook food, and so gets an opportunity of drugging the unleavened bread, or rice, of his victims. On railway journeys he often attains his object by gifts of sweetmeats of which young Indian women are as fond as their American sisters.

His poison is almost invariably Dhatura, or Stramonium, a drug very largely used in Western medicine.

The plant is popularly called the Thorn apple and is known in Spanish as the *Yerba de huaco*, the "Plant of the Graves." It is used in South America in the form of a drink which produces hallucinations that bring the habitué into imaginary communication with the spirits of his ancestors.

The Road Poisoner has no intention of killing his victims. His desire is to render them insensible, rob them, and then make his escape, but too often he gives an overdose and his prey falls into a sleep which knows no waking.

As in the case of the modern *Dacoit*, the railways are of the greatest assistance to the criminal of this type. He

quietly relieves his sleeping victims of their rupees and jewellery, and slipping into the next train is hundreds of miles away before they wake up or their frightened fellow-travellers discover that the jolly dancing-girls of the previous evening will never dance again, or the burly Afghan horse-copers will never again sell to a newcomer a spavined screw.

In many parts of India, powdered glass is popularly believed to be a very active poison, and I have often known it to be used both by would-be suicides and in attempts at murder.

Diamonds and diamond dust are also credited with very poisonous properties.

As a matter of fact both these substances are relatively harmless, and only act as mechanical irritants.

Arsenic is the favourite poison employed by the Indian poisoner who really wishes to destroy his victim. Its comparative tastelessness, the minute quantity necessary to destroy life, the readiness with which it can be procured in any Indian bazaar, and the resemblance of the symptoms of arsenical poisoning to those of cholera render the drug an easy and effective agent in unscrupulous hands.

Common white arsenic is known in the vernacular as *Sankhya*, or the "conch shell," from the glassy lustre of the lumps of the crude drug, and is yearly imported in large quantities, chiefly from the Persian Gulf. It is an ordinary article of commerce in Indian bazaars as it is used for a variety of commercial purposes, such as preserving wood and skins, and by goldsmiths in gold working. Besides its industrial uses, the drug is largely employed in both medical and veterinary practice.

In the Punjab it is used as an alternative to opium-eating, and has a high reputation as an aphrodisiac.

Probably on account of its value as a sexual stimulant it is employed in love philtres, and several cases are recorded in which Indian girls have been poisoned by sweetmeats

offered quite innocently to induce them to accept the addresses of love-lorn swains.

Often arsenic is administered in trials by ordeal, such as the following incident which is authentic: "A man lost some ornaments, and suspected his sister of stealing them. On the advice of a 'wise man,' he put a copper pot outside his door with a lump of cowdung in it, informing his friends and neighbours that he had done so, and that if the thief put the ornaments into the pot, nothing further would be said. This device failed. The 'wise man' thereupon assembled the neighbours, and an ordeal was instituted, each person being required to eat a small quantity of sweetmeat." The result was that the sister died with symptoms of irritant poisoning, and as the attention of the police was aroused, a post-mortem examination was held and a poisonous quantity of arsenic was found in the contents of her stomach.

It is fortunate for the ends of justice that the smallest traces of this poison can be detected with absolute certainty and ease, and there is little possibility of its escaping detection, if suspicion is once aroused. But it frequently happens in India, as in Europe, that when the amount administered is not sufficient to cause violent irritation, the murder passes undetected, and it is only when the modern Thug, emboldened by success, develops a lust for killing that suspicion is aroused by the number of his, or her victims.

Truly India is a strange land and notwithstanding the achievements of the last century, old practices die hard, and it is not too much to say that the strangler of the last century has reappeared as the poisoner of to-day.

CHAPTER XVII

MARRIAGE AND MORALS

"The ancient books of the Hindoos lay down a rule that after sunset on his marriage night a man should sit silent with his wife till the stars begin to twinkle in the sky. When the pole-star appears he should point it out to her, and, addressing the star, say, 'Firm art thou; I see thee, the firm one. Firm be thou with me, O thriving one!' Then, turning to his wife, he should say, 'To me Brihaspati has given thee; obtaining offspring through me, thy husband, live with me a hundred autumns.' The intention of the ceremony is plainly to guard against the fickleness of fortune and the instability of earthly bliss by the steadfast influence of the constant star. It is the wish expressed in Keat's last sonnet:

'Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night.' "

FRAZER: *The Golden Bough.*

MARRIAGE is a sacred duty among Hindus, a duty which every parent must perform for his children, otherwise they owe him no reverence. A family with a daughter unmarried after the age of puberty is considered to labour under the displeasure of the gods; and no member of the other sex considers himself respectable after the age of puberty till he is married. It is the duty of his parent or elder brothers to have him suitably married; and if they do not do so, he reproaches them with his *degraded condition*. The same feeling, in a degree, pervades all the Mohammedan community, and nothing appears so strange to them as the apparent indifference of old bachelors among us to their *sad condition.*

"Marriage, with all its ceremonies, its rights, and its duties, fills their imagination from infancy to age; and I do not believe there is a country upon earth in which a larger portion of the wealth of the community is spent in the ceremonies, or where the rights are better secured, or the duties better enforced, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of the laws of polygamy. Not one man in ten can afford to maintain more than one wife, and not one in ten of those who can afford it will venture upon a 'sea of troubles' in taking a second, if he has a child by the first. One of the evils which press most upon Indian society is the necessity which long usage has established of squandering large sums in marriage ceremonies. Instead of giving what they can to their children to establish them, and enable them to provide for their families and rise in the world, parents everywhere feel bound to squander all they can borrow in the festivities of their marriage."

So wrote General Sleeman nearly ninety years ago; but things change slowly in the East, and what he wrote applies just as much to-day.

The declaration of Christ recorded by the Apostles St. Matthew and St. Mark, was regarded so literally in England, that up till 1857 actual dissolution of the marriage tie could only be obtained by Act of Parliament. Yet it is a curious fact that since the Reformation it ceased to be regarded as a sacrament, and it was not till 1753 that Lord Hardwick's Act was passed making a formal ceremony essential to an English marriage.

In India from very ancient times marriage has been regarded as a sacrament and is obligatory on all the "twice-born," except those who desire to adopt the life of a perpetual *Brahmachari*, or professed religious student or other ascetic. Marriage is, however, by Hindu law a civil contract carrying with it serious obligations.

Eight forms of marriage were recognized under the Law of Manu, but only two have survived. The gift of a daughter, clothed only with a single robe, to a man learned in the

Vedas, whom her father voluntarily invites and respectfully receives, is the nuptial rite called *Brahma.*

Although this rite is the only ceremony considered really orthodox, the attitude of Indian lawyers is that if it can be shown, by the custom of the caste or district, that any other form is considered as constituting a marriage, then the adoption of that form, with the intention of thereby constituting the marriage bond, is regarded as sufficient. The result is that an endless variety of marriage customs exist.

The Brahma ceremony was formerly peculiar to Brahmans, but is now employed by all castes of Hindus.

The Brahma ceremonies usually commence with the performance of the *nandimukh,* or *vriddi shradda,* by the bride's father in honour of his ancestors, and the ceremonious bathing of the bride. On the bridegroom coming to the house, he is ceremoniously received, and certain ceremonies, the most important of which is the gift of the bride to the bridegroom, are observed. On the night of that day, or on the day following, the operative marriage ceremonies are performed by the bridegroom and bride. This is the formal acceptance of the bride's hand by the bridegroom. The sacred fire is kindled and oblations are made. The bridegroom takes the bride's hand, she steps on a stone. The bridegroom recites a fixed text. A hymn is chanted. The bride and bridegroom walk round the fire, and then comes the most material of marriage rites. The bride is conducted by the bridegroom, and directed by him to step successively into seven circles, a text being recited at each step. On the taking of the seventh step, and not until then, the marriage is complete and irrevocable. The bride thenceforth becomes a member of her husband's family.

Other ceremonies which are not essential to the validity of the marriage are subsequently performed.

The other form of marriage universally recognized by modern Hindu Law is marriage by purchase. The bridegroom gives as much wealth as he can afford to the father

and paternal kinsmen, and to the damsel herself, and takes her voluntarily as his bride. This form is styled *Asura.*

This form of marriage was permissible to *Vaisyas* and *Sudras*, but not to the two highest classes. It is now applicable to all classes and is commonly practised throughout India. It is said to be, in fact, the most common form of marriage, at any rate among Sudras in Southern India, and members of certain inferior castes in Western India.

A curious system called *Sata*, or exchange by marriage, is practised by certain castes. This variety of wedlock is conditional upon the bridegroom's father providing a girl to be married to the son of the bride's father, and legal marriage does not take effect until the condition has been performed, although the nuptial ceremonies have been completed.

The selection of persons to be married is limited by two rules: first, that they must be chosen outside the family; secondly, that they must be chosen inside the caste.

One of the older forms of marriage was marriage by capture, which was designed for the warrior tribes. Although now illegal, it is said to be still practised among the Meenas, a robber tribe of Central India, and among the Gonds of Behar, not as a symbol but a matter of real earnest—as real as any other form of robbery.

The old Indian lawyers sought to legalise all forms of intercourse between eligible parties, as the ancient code actually recognized as a form of marriage the amorous embraces of youths and damsels, which would be designated by a harsher name in modern times, both in India and Western countries.

It would be impossible even to enumerate the different nuptial rites sanctioned by custom in various parts of India. A Rajah of Orissa, for example, can marry a girl by throwing a garland round her neck, but one of the most curious marital methods is widespread in the Madras Presidency. An adult girl is married to a mere child and till he grows up the wife may associate with any member of her husband's

family or caste, and if children result they are recognized as the husband's lawful offspring.

All the early Hindu writers inculcate marriage of girls before puberty, and the father who failed to arrange for the early marriage of his girls was guilty of the sin of "slaying the embryo," that is, preventing the birth of children who might otherwise have been born to them.

In Southern India this practice of infant marriage is recognized among the Brahmans and the higher middle classes; in fact, among those who, by origin or imitation, claim to be considered orthodox Hindus. In the lower castes it is not ordinarily required, but imitation of the practice of the higher castes in this respect has become widespread. In the Punjab child marriages are little known except in the Eastern districts. Elsewhere the marriage ceremony between infants is merely an inviolable betrothal, followed by a further ceremony named *Muklawa* at puberty. In the United Provinces it is an occasional custom of some castes to betroth children before they are born, subject of course to the condition of turning out of opposite sexes. In Assam child marriage is not permitted, except possibly among some of the higher castes. Sometimes a father bespeaks for his son the daughter of another man as soon as she is born, and the two are looked upon as married. But the arrangement is, both in fact and in law, nothing more than a betrothal. Cohabitation is not permitted before maturity, and the actual partners can, if they so desire, refuse to carry out the arrangements entered into by their parents. As regards Bengal, the marriage of infant girls "is found to an appreciable extent" only in the western half of the Province, that is, in Behar and Western Bengal; the practice may be said not to exist among the non-Hinduised tribes. In Burmah, juvenile marriage does not exist.

Child marriage is now penalized by an Act of the Legislative Assembly passed in 1929, but the custom is so closely bound up with the whole of Indian life throughout the

country, that in the absence of a general system of registration the law is difficult to enforce.

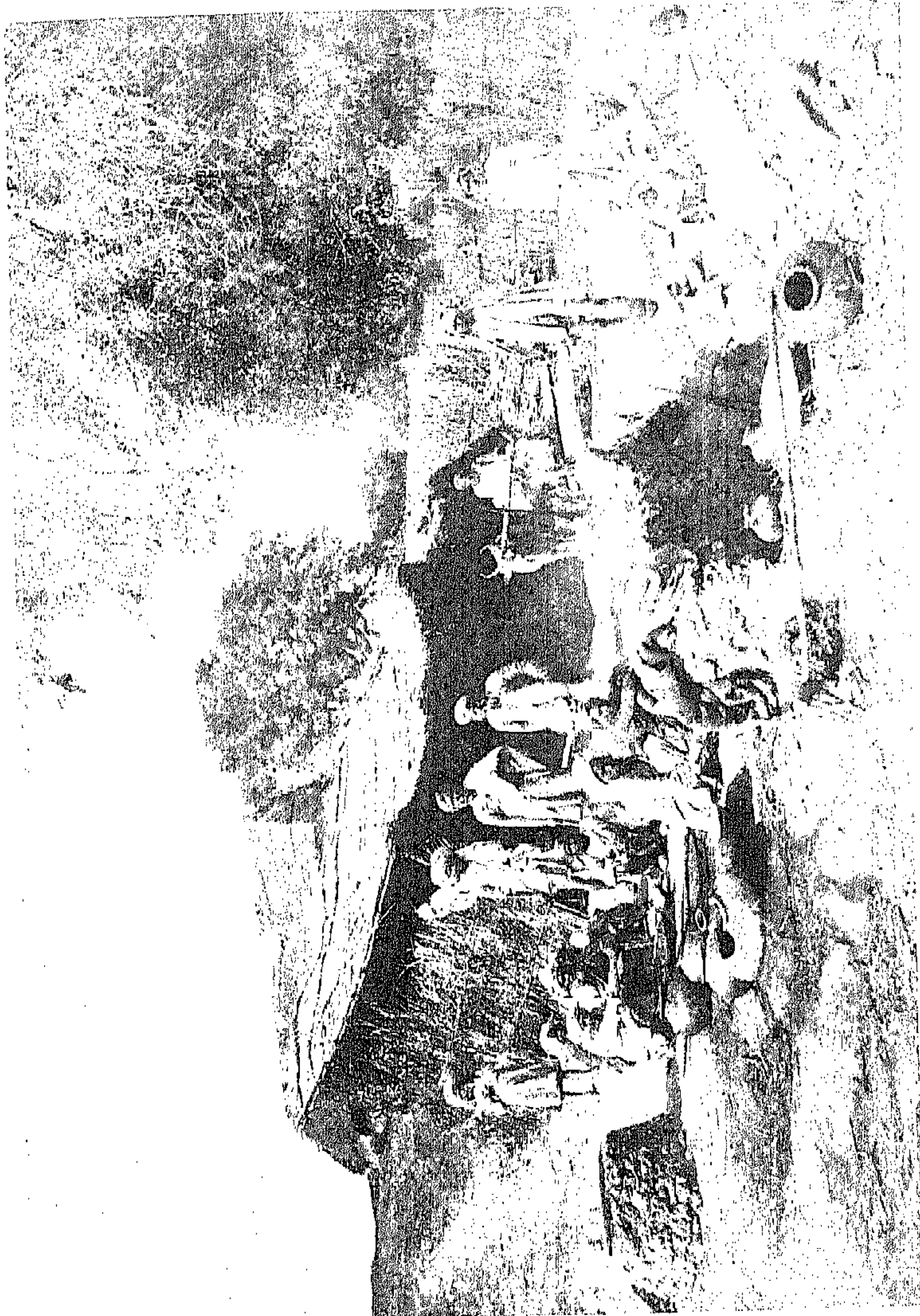
Long before the passing of the Act the Servants of India and other societies had done a great deal towards directing public attention to a practice which seems unworthy of a great social system such as Hinduism, and as enlightened Hindus are themselves striving for reform, this will be more effective than any legislation. Generally speaking, there is amongst Hindus a form of betrothal which has been confounded by Western writers with the actual marriage ceremony, as it is a solemn ceremonial with numerous formalities and many recitals of holy texts. Such betrothal is however revocable and is not, in law, any obstacle to a marriage with another man.

A promise of marriage cannot be enforced by a suit for specific performance, but a refusal to complete a betrothal or a promise of marriage by an actual marriage would give to the injured party a right to recover from the person making the promise compensation for the loss, if any, sustained by the breach of promise. In case of such breach, a father, or guardian, would be entitled to recover money properly expended in contemplation of such marriage.

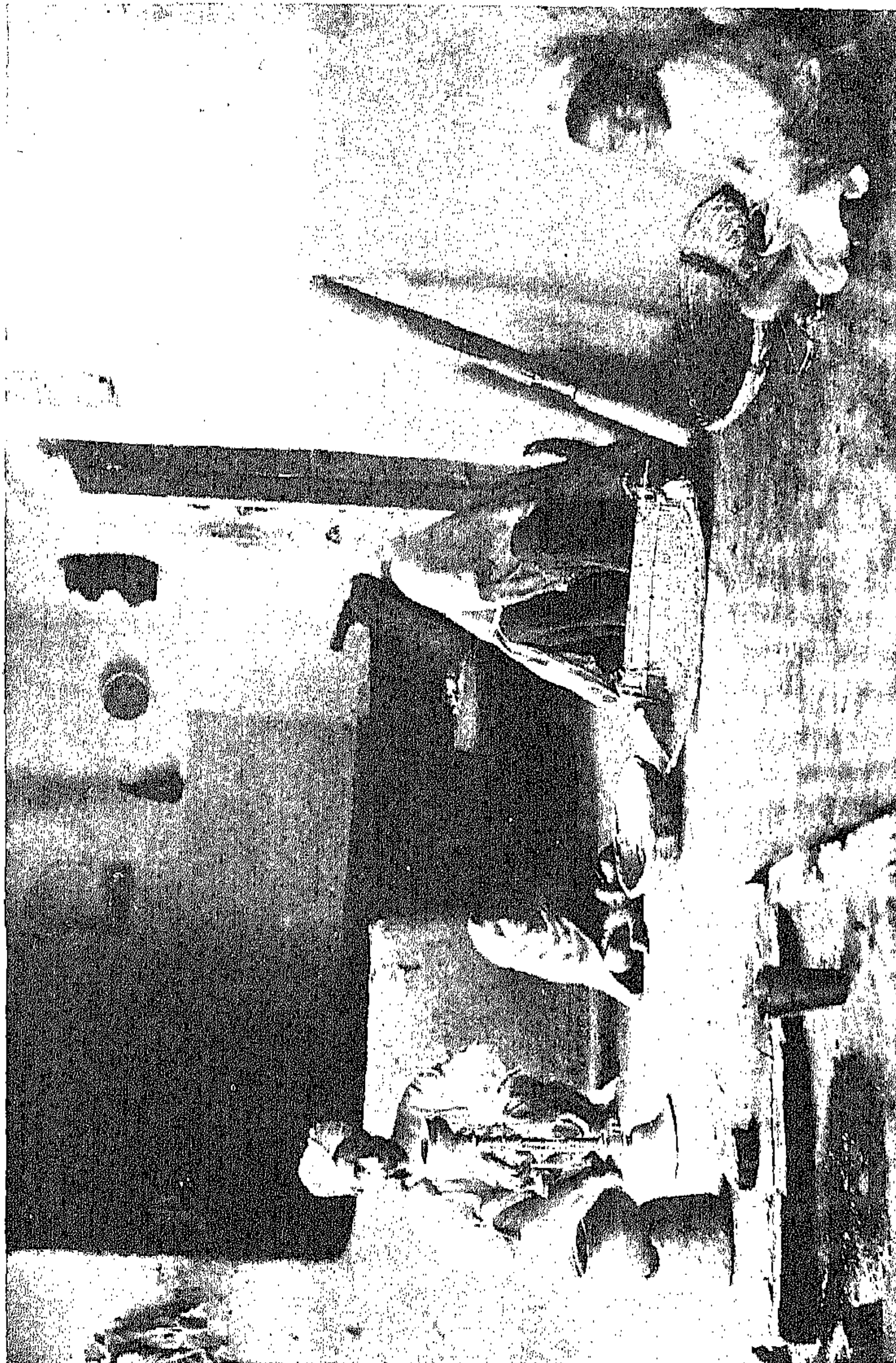
Should the betrothed damsel die before the marriage, the bridegroom is entitled to recover back the presents given by him to her, subject to paying such expenses as have been incurred.

On the Malabar Coast very curious marriage customs exist. The beliefs and practices of some castes in this great tract of country are derived from a book which is supposed to have been written by an incarnation of Vishnu. It recites how Parasu Rama pronounced his commandment to the women (not being of the Brahman caste) to satisfy the desires of Brahmans, enjoining upon them to put off chastity and the cloth which covered their breasts, and declaring that promiscuous intercourse with three or four men in common was void of the least taint of sin.

Girls of the Nair tribe of Malabar go through a curious



THE PEASANT FOLK OF INDIA
The Crops and the Cattle are all their care "And the rest is the will of God."



[Photo: F. Deaville Walker

LOW CASTE HOME IN NORTH INDIA

Face page 183]

ceremony called "tying the *talee*," or marriage string. It is performed before puberty, and the bridegroom is a boy whose horoscope is suitable to the girl's. The ceremonial, which lasts four days, follows out the whole drama of an actual marriage, going even to the length of a fictitious cohabitation. It terminates with the tearing of a cloth, the pieces of which are given to the boy and to the girl, and which typifies a divorce. The whole thing is then at an end. The parties separate, and may possibly never see each other again. The effect of the ceremony is to give the girl a marriageable status, without which she cannot enter into any matrimonial contract. Failure to perform it is said to involve excommunication from caste. The symbolical character of the ceremony is shown by the fact that the same bridegroom can "tie the talee" on a number of girls at the same time, which naturally reduces the cost to each. Where extreme economy is required, the bridegroom is dispensed with. The girl's mother makes an image of clay, adorns it with flowers, and invests her daughter with the marriage string in the presence of the idol.

The whole of this ceremonial is said to be designed to free the girl from the gods who are supposed to lay claim to every virgin.

Among the Maravas of Madura, if the betrothed husband dies before marriage, the ceremony is completed in the presence and on behalf of his corpse, which must be placed on a seat beside the bride. When the rite is over, the talee, or marriage-string, is taken off the bride, and she is free to marry again as soon as she pleases. Similarly among some Brahmans of the West Coast it is not considered seemly for an adult woman, who dies unmarried, to arrive in the next world in a state of single blessedness. So a handsome sum is paid to secure a "husband" for the dead woman, and a form of marriage is gone through between her corpse and a living bridegroom.

The Nairs do not adopt the usual ceremony of marriage and the nuptial bond is dissoluble at the will of either

party. The wife and children acquire no rights of maintenance or inheritance. This practice does not seem to have been recognized by the Courts of Law, but it has been recognized by the Legislature in permitting registration of such marriages.

The Travancore Legislative Council has passed a Law which recognizes the custom of the presentation of a piece of cloth by a bridegroom to the bride as a legal form of marriage among Nairs.

The old Hindu law attached a peculiar sanctity to the first marriage, as being that which was contracted from a sense of duty, and not merely for personal gratification. The first married wife had precedence over the others, and her first-born son over his half-brothers. It is probable that originally the subsequent wives were considered as merely a superior class of concubines, like the handmaids of the Jewish patriarchs.

It is now quite settled in the Courts of British India that a Hindu is absolutely without restriction as to the number of his wives, and may marry again without his wife's consent, or any justification, except his own wish. Contracting a second marriage during the lifetime of the wife is called supersession, but does not in any way imply that the first wife is deserted.

The Hindu writers prescribe that a present should be given to the wife as compensation for her supersession, but they do not agree as to the amount. "Such compensation could not apparently be claimed in a Court of Law."

The ghost of a first wife is supposed to resent the happiness of her successor. In Upper India, to avoid her wrath a widower who marries a second time wears round his neck an image of his first wife, and every present he makes to his new wife he offers first to the image.

In certain tribes in the Nilghiris, immorality in the family circle is not regarded harshly, doubtless a survival of days when wives were held in common.

Polyandry is rare on the Indian plains, but exists as

an institution among the carpenter and blacksmith classes on the Malabar Coast, where the chosen husbands celebrate their polyandrous marriage with much ceremony and pomp. The custom is common in the Himalayas and Nilghiris, as we have seen, where the food supply of the surrounding country is scarce.

My readers will remember the "Woman of Shamlegh and her two husbands," who was so kindly disposed to Kim.

In the Kulu hills beyond Simla the rule of inheritance is that of three of four brothers who have a wife in common, the eldest is deemed the father of the first-born son, the second of the next, and so on. This is absolute presumption of law, even though the facts are opposed to it. Among the monks of Lahul, polyandry arises from the fact that monks who have no vow of celibacy enter into monasteries and remain in communion with their elder brother, who stops at home and manages the estate.

In a caste of Madura, brothers, uncles, nephews and other relations have their wives in common, but outside the family they are chaste. Among many tribes in Assam, so long as a woman remains unmarried, chastity is not usually expected of her, and she may dispense her favours to whom she pleases. But when once she is married, this freedom is no longer tolerated and adultery is very severely punished.

The most remarkable feature of early Hindu family law is that sonship and marriage seemed to stand in no relation to each other. A man's son need not have been begotten by his father, nor need he have been produced by his father's wife.

In modern times children are a luxury to the rich, an encumbrance to the poor. In early ages female offspring stood in the same position, but male issue was passionately prized. The very existence of a tribe, surrounded by enemies, would depend upon the continual multiplication of its males. The sonless father would find himself without protection or support in sickness or old age, and would

see his land passing into other hands when he became unable to cultivate it. The necessity for male offspring extended in the case of the Aryan even beyond this world. His happiness in the next depended upon his having a continuous line of male descendants, whose duty it would be to make the periodical offerings for the repose of his soul. Hence the works of the Sanskrit sages state it to be the first duty of man to become the possessor of male offspring, and imprecate curses upon those who die without a son. Where a son was so indispensable, we might expect that every contrivance would be exhausted to procure one.

There were in former days no less than twelve sorts of sons obtained in a curious variety of ways, but all are now obsolete except the legitimate and adopted.

The adoption of sons by sonless Hindu fathers is practised all over India. Generally an elaborate religious ceremonial is observed, and there is a fiction that the adopted son is actually re-born into his new family, but in several parts of the country the adoption is purely a civil contract.

Usually a child cannot be adopted whose age exceeds five years, but, like most rules of law, this is by no means universal, and even married men with families can be adopted in some districts.

By adoption the boy is completely removed from his natural family as regards all civil rights or obligations. He ceases to perform funeral ceremonies for those of his family for whom he would otherwise have offered oblations, and he loses all rights of inheritance as completely as if he had never been born. Indeed, the fiction goes the length of treating the adopted son as having been from his birth in the family of his adoptive father, and therefore he cannot for any purpose be regarded as having existed so as to acquire a vested interest in the property of his natural father.

Adoption can be practised by women as well as men, and the adoption of daughters by dancing girls, to follow their adoptive mothers' profession, is practised and recognized

in Madras, Pondicherry and Western India, but in Calcutta and Madras such adoptions have been held to be illegal.

The marriage ceremony is not confined to the nuptial tie between men and women. It is carried out with regard to trees, plants and many inanimate objects. Neither the man who plants a grove, nor his wife, can taste of the fruit of his trees till he has "married" one of them to some other tree that grows near it in the same grove. Slleman tells a story of an old Hindu who spent so much in planting and watering a grove, and building walls and wells, that he could not afford to defray the expense of the marriage ceremonies till one of the mango trees, which was older than the rest when planted, began to bear fruit. The old gentleman and his wife were in great distress, as they dared not taste of the fruit of an unmarried tree! They believed that they had neglected a serious duty, and might, in consequence, incur the displeasure of the gods. They therefore sold all their silver and gold ornaments, and borrowed all they could; and before the next season the grove was "married" with all due pomp and ceremony.

The larger the number of the Brahmans that are fed on occasions of this sort, the greater the glory of the proprietor of the grove. We may smile at this sort of thing, but surely the giving of dinners far beyond the host's means is not confined to Oriental society.

Certain pebbles found in the bed of sacred rivers are believed to be pervaded with the special presence of Vishnu, the Preserver, and entitled to divine honours without the ceremony of consecration.

A small sacred shrub, the Tulsi, a species of Basil, is believed, as we have seen, to be a metamorphosis of the wife of Vishnu in one of his incarnations, and in former days the ceremony of marriage was carried out annually between one of these little stones and the shrub.

All the elaborate details of a regular marriage were gone through and the pebble was carried with great pomp to pay his bridal visit to the shrub. After the "marriage"

the "bride" and "bridegroom" went on a honeymoon of a year's duration in one of the temples.

Lakhs of rupees were sometimes spent on the feasts which accompanied these curious fictitious marriages in certain parts of India. The same fiction is carried out with regard to the marriage of girls to trees, with, it seems, the idea that the dangers of a second marriage should be passed on to the tree.

In other cases the girl seems to be married to the tree with the idea that she will absorb some of its fertility. In its crudest form tree-marriage appears among the Gauras of Orissa, when the girl is taken to the forest and left tied to a tree, if not to the mercy of wild beasts, at least as a prize to the first-comer. But usually it is arranged that some youth of an inferior branch of the tribe, to whom ordinarily she would not be married, carries her away as soon as her people had left her.

Marriage by proxy was formerly recognized, but I can find no authority for it in the various books on Hindu Law which I have consulted.

Sir John Malcolm, writing at the beginning of the last century, described the marriage of a Rajput girl to the Maharajah Holkar of Indore through the proxy of a shepherd. "The sword of the Mahratta ruler," he writes, "with his handkerchief bound round it, represented the prince, and to that the female was united: she married the wearer of the sword, not the shepherd."

Hindu women have not much to say with regard to their future husbands. Their marriages are arranged by their parents, as they are to-day in France and amongst the Irish peasants. They merge into their husband's family on marriage. Things are very different with their Moslem fellow countrywomen. Syed Ameer Ali says: "A woman who is *sui juris* can under no circumstances be married without her own express consent, 'not even by the sultan.' On her marriage she does not lose her individuality. She does not cease to be a separate member of society. An

ante-nuptial settlement by the husband in favour of the wife is a necessary condition, and on his failure to make a settlement the law presumes one in accordance with the social position of the wife. A Moslem marriage is a civil act, needing no priest, requiring no ceremonial. The contract of marriage gives the man no power over the woman's person, beyond what the law defines, and none whatever upon her goods and property. Her rights as a mother do not depend for their recognition upon the idiosyncracies of individual judges. Her earnings acquired by her own exertions cannot be wasted by a prodigal husband, nor can she be ill-treated with impunity by one who is brutal. She acts, if *sui juris*, in all matters which relate to herself and her property in her own individual right, without the intervention of husband or father. She can sue her debtors in the open courts, without the necessity of joining a next friend, or under cover of her husband's name. She continues to exercise, after she has passed from her father's house into her husband's home, all the rights which the law gives to men. All the privileges which belong to her as a woman and a wife are secured to her, not by the courtesies which 'come and go,' but by the actual text in the book of law. Taken as a whole, her status is not more unfavourable than that of many European women, whilst in many respects she occupies a decidedly better position. Her comparatively backward condition is the result of a want of culture among the community generally, rather than of any special feature in the laws of the fathers."

As indicated above, in Mussulman marriages the formal assent of both parties is all that seems necessary, and the bride is usually represented by her lawyer, but among the Baloch, as reported by Mr. Hughes-Buller, the ceremony can be carried out in a curious way. As a rule the marriage service is performed by a Mulla, who is a person learned in the Sacred Law; but if one does not happen to be easily available, it is customary for the bridegroom, or one of his relations, to proceed to the Mulla's residence with an

empty water-skin. The Mulla fills this water-skin with his breath, the mouth of the skin is carefully closed, and the skin brought back to the bride. The Mulla's breath is then emitted in the bride's face, and as soon as it touches her the marriage ceremony is considered to be sufficient and complete.

Divorce is unknown to the general Hindu Law, but is allowed by custom in certain localities and among certain low castes. Where it is allowed by custom, a divorce by mutual agreement is recognized by law. Although matters of divorce are frequently adjudicated upon by a *panchayet*, or assembly of a caste, such *panchayet* has no power to declare a marriage void or to give permission to a woman to re-marry. In castes where it is permitted, a divorce is generally not effectual except with the authority of the *panchayet*. It is incompetent to Hindus at the time of their marriage to arrange that the marriage shall be void in certain events, whether divorce is, or is not, permissible in the particular caste.

A dissolution of marriage is not effected by the adultery of the husband or wife. The only remedy which a blameless wife has against an offending husband is to obtain a decree for her separate maintenance, such decree being practically equivalent to a decree for judicial separation.

With the Moslems divorce is permitted, but three successive declarations at a month's interval are necessary to avoid ill-considered resolutions.

Some of the local customs with regard to divorce amongst the aboriginal tribes are very curious. Amongst one of the Kolarian clans in Western Bengal the husband tears a leaf from the sacred Saul tree in the presence of his relatives and those of his wife. This simple act dissolves the marriage bond!

In a country where marriage is a sacred duty and where the possession of a son is the dominant desire in the heart of every Hindu man, some writers seem to have considered it remarkable that illicit intercourse should exist to any con-

siderable extent, but I believe that as a matter of fact it is no more common in India than in the countries of the West.

The dancing girls who are attached to the temples have come in for a great deal of criticism, but it should be recognized that temples large enough to have such "servants of the gods" attached to them are—in view of the immensity of the country—few and far between.

It is only fair to quote Mr. Ranga Iyer, who says: "In India, the prostitutes form a class by themselves. It is untrue to say that they belong to respectable families of rank and position. The mother of a prostitute was a prostitute once. The daughter becomes a prostitute. . . . The idea of allowing the young girls of the prostitute class to grow in the atmosphere of the temples is to instil into them some religion, some fear of God, so that when they come of age they may not indulge in promiscuity, but be the mistress of one man. The prostitutes of India are, therefore, one of the most god-fearing and loyal class of mistresses known to that unfortunate profession."

It is quite true, however, that the courtesans occupy a curious position in Indian Society. Even the Abbé Dubois, in his pessimistic account of the Hindu people, whilst deploring the skill by which they display the beauty of their hair, which they entwine with sweet-scented flowers, and their graceful attitudes, has a good word to say for them. He says: "Of all the women in India it is the courtesans, and especially those attached to the temples, who are the most decently clothed." Indeed, much to the detriment of her European sister, the Abbé praises the modest deportment in public of the Indian dancing girl!

The fact is that, until comparatively recent years, these so-called dancing girls were the only women in India who could read, dance and sing.

To this day dancing is still restricted to the professional dancing girls and is not considered respectable by Indian ladies.

There are now many Indian women who are companions, in every sense of the word, to their husbands, but until

their very recent emancipation comparatively few were capable of carrying on a conversation with their often highly-cultured husbands on any subject not of a purely domestic nature.

The result has been that the society of the educated, and always attractive, dancing girls has been eagerly sought by men of all classes as a distraction to their somewhat sordid home life, and for their intellectual and not for their physical charms.

Kipling in his inimitable way brings this out in his instructive story, *On the City Wall.*

Lovers of that master-craftsman of Indian story writers will recall that Lalun was "a member of the most ancient profession in the world. Lilith was her very-great-grand-mamma, and that was before the days of Eve, as everyone knows. In the West, people say rude things about Lalun's profession, and write lectures about it, and distribute the lectures to young persons in order that Morality may be preserved. In the East, where the profession is hereditary, descending from mother to daughter, nobody writes lectures or takes any notice; and that is a distinct proof of the inability of the East to manage its own affairs.

"Lalun's real husband, for even ladies of Lalun's profession in the East must have husbands, was a big jujube-tree. Her Mamma, who had married a fig-tree, spent ten thousand rupees on Lalun's wedding, which was blessed by forty-seven clergymen of Mamma's Church, and distributed five thousand rupees in charity to the poor. And that was the custom of the land. The advantages of having a jujube-tree for a husband are obvious. You cannot hurt his feelings, and he looks imposing.

"Lalun's husband stood on the plain outside the City walls, and Lalun's house was upon the east wall facing the river."

The reader will remember that Wali Dad, a clean-bred young Mohammedan, with pencilled eyebrows, small-cut nostrils, little feet and hands, and a very tired look in his

eyes, who was suffering acutely from education of the English variety and knew it, spent a great deal of his time making love to Lalun.

Kipling tells us that "the feet of the young men of the City tended to her doorways and then—retired, for Lalun was a particular maiden, slow of speech, reserved of mind, and not in the least inclined to orgies which were nearly certain to end in strife."

"In the long hot nights of latter April and May all the City seemed to assemble in Lalun's little white room to smoke and to talk. Shiahs of the grimmest and most uncompromising persuasion; Sufis who had lost all belief in the Prophet and retained but little in God; wandering Hindu priests passing southward on their way to the Central India fairs and other affairs; Pundits in black gowns, with spectacles on their noses and undigested wisdom in their insides; bearded headmen of the wards; Sikhs with all the details of the latest ecclesiastical scandal in the Golden Temple; red-eyed priests from beyond the Border, looking like trapped wolves and talking like ravens; M.A.'s of the University, very superior and very voluble—all these people and more also you might find in the white room."

The central figure of the story is a gallant and picturesque old rebel who had fought against the Raj and is utilized by political leaders to bring about one of those religious riots which are so likely to occur at the Mohurrum, which, as we have seen, is the great mourning festival of the Mohammedans.

Those who read this chapter should re-read this brilliant story, which will be found in the fascinating collection called *In Black and White.* It brings out very vividly the point I have tried to make, that the Indian courtesan is very different from her Western sister.

I wonder how many of the little political plots by "gentlemen with gold *pince-nez*" and foolish Wali Dads are being hatched as I write in "little white rooms" on many a "City Wall."

CHAPTER XVIII

SORROWS OF CHILD-BIRTH

"Ye know the Hundred Danger Time when gay with paint and flowers,
Your household gods are bribed to help the bitter help-less hours;
Ye know the worn and rotten mat whereon your daughter lies,
Ye know the Sootak-room unclean, the cell wherein she dies.

Dies with the babble in her ear of midwife's muttered charm,
Dies, spite young life that strains to stay, the suckling on her arm—
Dies in the four-fold heated room, parched by the Birth-Fire's breath—
Foredoomed, ye say, lest anguish lack, to haunt her home in death."

KIPLING: *A Song of the Women.*

AMONG the most pressing problems of India's health is that presented by the appalling maternal and infant mortality. The actual figures for maternal mortality are not known, but they are certainly not less than ten per thousand live births, and often more. It has been estimated that no fewer than two million Indian babies die every year, and many others only survive to become weak and feeble from unhygienic surroundings during their infancy.

"The barbarities practised in Indian homes even amongst the well-to-do at the time of delivery would horrify civilized people. None but those who have witnessed a case conducted by ignorant *dais* (midwives) can realize the unneces-

sary suffering and the risk to the women and the children. Many women who are childless and permanently disabled are so from mal-treatment received during delivery. Many men are without male issues, and in consequence many homes are unhappy because the child has been killed by ignorance, or lack of proper care during and after birth, or because their wives were so mangled during child-birth that they are incapable of further child-bearing."

These words are not the views of a Western or even an American critic, but are taken from a paper by an Indian lady doctor read at a Conference of the All-India Social Workers, held at Bombay.

There is no country in the world where the desire for children is stronger than in India. In the home of a newly-married couple it reaches a pitch of passionate longing to which those of the West are mostly strangers. To the husband it is not merely the natural parental instinct strengthened by the wish for an heir to his name and property, it has with the large bulk of the population a strong religious basis, founded on the duty of the son to pay the last sacred rites to the bodies of his parents.

To the wife, even stronger than her desire for motherhood, is the knowledge that if she fails to bear a son her chances of a happy married life are small indeed. Even if her husband's affection survives the disappointment, she will incur the scorn and derision of his family and have to face the possibility of a rival.

Pregnancy is a source of intense gratification to every Indian woman, and she looks forward to the culmination of her desires with joyful expectancy, but unfortunately custom has placed her at the moment of the realization of her hopes under desperate disadvantages as compared with her more fortunate sister in the West.

The "barbarities" referred to above have a threefold basis, namely, the religious prejudice that the lying-in woman is ceremonially unclean, the belief that fresh air is dangerous to mother and child; and the ignorance and

superstition of an hereditary caste to whom for centuries custom has consigned the care of all parturient women.

The notion that a woman at the supreme hour of her existence is a source of defilement to others, determines the whole entourage of the confinement.

The scene of labour is some apartment not used by the other members of the household. Usually it is a small dark room, almost devoid of all means of entrance for light and air. The low, narrow door is covered with matting and sacking. The window, if there is one at all, is closed with wooden shutters, and any chinks are stopped up with paper or rags. The walls and floor are usually plastered with the mixture of cowdung and mud so popular in India. The woman lies on old clothes, filthy from age, either on the floor or on an old string "charpoy" in one corner of the room, and is screened from every breath of air by means of dirty old quilts or blankets.

The attendant or *dai* inherits her office and her skill (or lack of it) from a relation who has been a *dai* before her, and as her work is considered unclean she is, naturally, of the lowest class.

In some cases the *dais* have attendants, whose sole duty is to cut the cord, as this is supposed to be the most unclean part of a labour case. This operation is carried out with either an old knife encrusted with the rust and dirt of years, or by means of a split bamboo. The cord is tied with a dirty piece of string. At times the *dais* do not tie the ends of the cord properly and the infant dies of hæmorrhage; at others they tug at the maternal end with the result that a portion of the afterbirth is retained, or the womb is inverted.

To remove the afterbirth, the patient's abdomen is massaged—often with the unfortunate woman standing against the wall. When delivered, the afterbirth is covered with salt and burned, or buried in a corner of the room! A very tight roll of cloth is wound round the woman's waist in such a way that it has no effect either in supporting the

abdominal muscles or aiding contraction of the womb. The *dai* then inserts into the vagina a plug consisting of either salt, crude sugar (with or without a copper coin) or cotton wool (which has probably been taken from an old pillow or quilt) soaked in native spirits!

This represents the conduct of an ordinary case, but when labour is delayed it is complicated by frequent examinations and efforts to extract the child by the dirt-grimed hands of the *dai*. Hot water is not thought of; towels are unknown; and the cleansing process prior to inserting the hand into the vagina, or even the womb itself, is to wipe it on the mud-plastered floor!

After delivery, for a period of five to thirteen days, the young mother—she may be only twelve or less—lies unwashed in an atmosphere of incredible foulness, undergoing a dietetic regime of the utmost severity. Milk and every kind of nourishing food is forbidden during most of the first week. Water is regarded as likely to cause chill and is given sparingly; indeed, sometimes it is entirely withheld during the first twenty-four hours. Bitter drugs and condiments are given freely, and if the child dies it is the practice in Rajputana to give the mother a decoction of copper coins and bamboo during the first three days.

Generally speaking, the gruel of old Sarah Gamp finds its counterpart in rice and pepper water as the favourite diet for the most trying and exhausting days of a woman's life.

What of the child whilst the mother is receiving this medieval treatment? Its cord is dressed with charcoal or red earth. It is not put to the breast for three or four days, and is fed on milk, often on a rag leading from a brass cup. A loathsome practice in the Central Provinces is to give the unfortunate infant sugar mixed with its own urine.

When the *dai* is sent for to a case she usually changes even her ordinary working clothing for filthy rags, and the delay is a fortunate thing, as if she reaches the woman

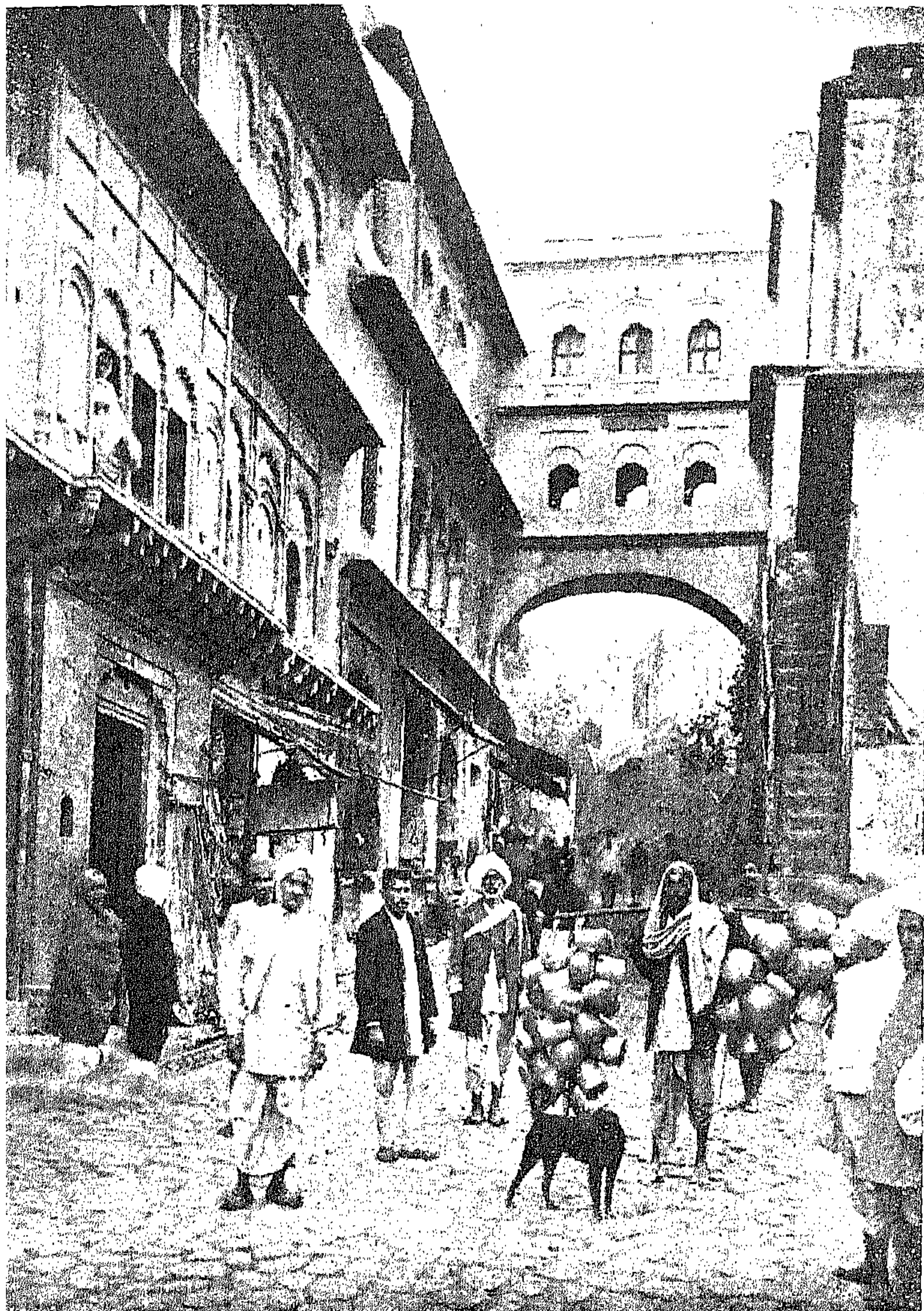
during the first stage of labour, so much the worse for the patient. She makes her run about the room, lift heavy weights, or squat on the mud floor; and if these efforts fail to produce sufficient progress, she places heavy weights on the abdomen or inserts a vaginal plug of dirty rags. The results of these manœuvres are often to participate delivery, with injury to the child, hæmorrhage, and of course rupture of the perineum.

What I have outlined may be news to some of my readers, but it is an old story, for as far back as 1885, the unhappy conditions of childbirth among Indian women were already known to a few in this country, and Queen Victoria asked the wife of the then Viceroy to endeavour to arrange for a supply of women doctors for the zenanas of India.

Lady Dufferin started a fund to provide women doctors; zenana hospitals sprang up all over the Empire, and the training of nurses and midwives was begun.

Increased knowledge of actual events only served to bring into relief the terrible suffering and unnecessary loss of life amongst mothers and babies. It became evident that while natural labour was not more difficult, if so difficult, as in Western countries, yet an appalling amount of the form of blood poisoning known as puerperal sepsis followed. The disease of osteomalachia, or adult rickets, was found to be prevalent in many parts of India, causing pelvic contraction, so that delivery without skilled help was impossible. It also became established that in addition to the altruistic attitude of the charitably minded, there was also the *dai's* point of view.

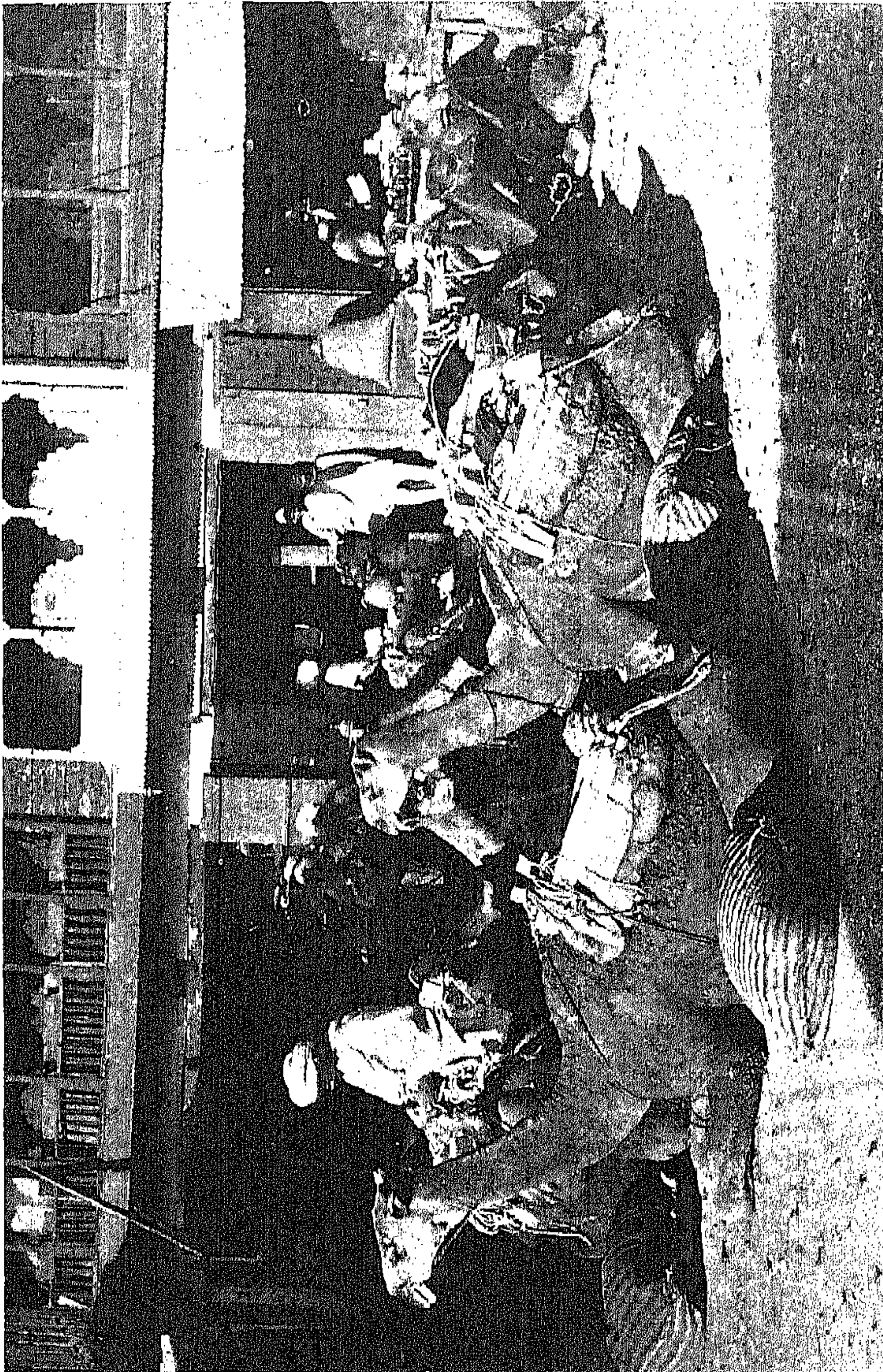
As I have said, the *dai* has inherited a despised calling, and is always wretchedly poor. She has all the valour of ignorance, and is out to earn a living according to her lights; moreover, she is very badly paid. She may be given a fee anything from two annas for a girl and four annas for a boy in a poor neighbourhood, up to fifteen rupees, about twenty-three shillings, in the houses of the rich; and it should be remembered that the conditions of maternity nursing I



[*Photo: F. Deaville Walker*

STREET IN A NORTH INDIAN CITY

[*Face page* 198



INDIAN BAZAAR SCENE

Face page 199]

have outlined do not apply merely to houses of peasants and labourers, but are to be found in the inner recesses of pretentious Indian homes, even in houses of the wealthy, where outwardly such evidences of Western progress are present as electric light, the telephone, the gramophone, or even wireless! The *dai's* fee includes attendance not only during labour but also for about ten days afterwards, at the end of which period it is customary for the woman to have her ceremonial bath. The *dai* is expected to leep with cowdung the defiled accouchement chamber and to wash all the soiled linen of patient and baby which the Indian washerman will not touch.

It was felt that something must be done for these Indian midwives who are mostly kindly, good-hearted women and merely the victims of traditional ignorance. So as the result of the efforts of Lady Curzon, the Victoria Memorial Scholarship Fund came into being in 1903, expressly for the purpose of training the hereditary *dai* class as opposed to midwives taken from other sections of the community, whose training was left to hospitals and municipalities, which had already started work in this direction.

Unfortunately the movement caused considerable alarm amongst the *dai* castes, who in nearly every case believed that it was intended to deprive them of their livelihood. As years went on unsatisfactory progress was made, and the Fund came to be applied to the training of women not of the *dai* class and to the stipending of nurses in Dufferin Hospitals, who received a midwifery training. Since 1918, an effort has been made to get to work on better lines, and the latest Reports of the Fund are much more encouraging than their predecessors.

The prospect of success has only appeared since the principle was established that the training of *dais* must be combined with supervision of their work, and efforts are being made in this direction in several places. In support of the work which the Victoria Memorial Scholarship Fund has been carrying on for over a score of years, the Lady

Chelmsford All India Maternity and Child Welfare Association came into being in 1921, and a year or so later the three kindred organizations, the Dufferin Fund, Victoria Memorial Scholarship Fund and Chelmsford League, whilst still maintaining their identity, were placed under the administration of an able member of the Women's Medical Service for India.

The Indian Red Cross Society has recently come into this important field, and has now amalgamated with the Chelmsford Association, forming a Maternity and Child Welfare Bureau which is doing work in all the great centres of population for the training of midwives and the instruction of mothers in the care of their babies.

Training centres for Indian and Anglo-Indian women have been established to spread the elements of infant hygiene in all parts of the Indian Empire.

The most hopeful signs of improvement are to be found in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, where organizations are provided by both the Corporations of these great cities, and by voluntary bodies. In Delhi, the municipality employs a Medical woman who superintends this kind of work under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health, and in the United Provinces there is a Medical woman in charge of the work under the direction of the Inspector-General of Civil hospitals.

Training schools for midwives have been started all over the country, and even in the North West Frontier, on the Afghan border, this work is carried on.

The *Indian Year Book* sums up the position as follows: "So far all the schemes have devoted their attention to educating women in the elements of mothercraft and attempting to preserve infant lives and improve child health. In a land of so many languages and superstitions progress will necessarily be slow and India has yet to decide whether she will work intensively and try to rear a few well developed children as far as adolescence or extensively attempt to bring a large number of infants through the first critical

months, only to have them perish at a later stage from the many ills that childhood is heir to in a land of great poverty, under-nourishment, epidemics and famine. In Western lands the Child Welfare Movement has no more marked characteristic than its inability to stop expanding. Its ramifications know no bounds. Its inevitable corollaries are endless, and like the banyan tree it will no doubt in India also develop innumerable fresh roots, medical supervision, dental clinics, better housing, open air playgrounds, and many other improvements. But these are not yet. Its preliminary task is to educate the mothers of India to the enormity of allowing two million babies to perish every year and to convince them of the equally important fact that a high death rate always spells also a high damage rate of sickly, under-developed, incompetent citizens."

I would like to emphasize the fact that the work being carried on is, in the main, administered entirely by Indians who are endeavouring to educate the Indian public with reference to the "barbarities" of which I have spoken above.

Enough has been said to show that there is a quickening of the public conscience in India to-day, and that a definite movement is in progress to combat the social and semi-religious customs which are responsible for the terrible dangers which have hitherto attended child-birth in the great sub-continent.

CHAPTER XIX

WOMEN, WIVES AND WIDOWS

"My father's wife is old and harsh with years
And drudge of all my father's house am I—
My bread is sorrow and my drink is tears.
Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!"

KIPLING.

THE position of women in ancient India was peculiar. The sex was regarded with the utmost veneration, and as we shall see, this fact has been of great political importance of recent years. But, as in most countries, when an Indian woman married she lost her personality in that of her husband. The sacred writings of the Hindus say that "Married women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers and brethren; by their husbands and by the brethren of their husbands if they seek abundant prosperity;" but the adornment is for the sake of the husband rather than herself, as the old Law-giver, Manu, says, "Certainly if the wife be not elegantly attired, she will not exhilarate her husband; and if her lord want hilarity, offspring will not be produced."

Here is the ancient Hindu attitude of mind with regard to the relations of husband and wife: "To a wife her husband is like a god." Though unobservant of approved usages, or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must constantly be revered as a god by a virtuous wife. The penalty of failing to observe this one-sided marital law was that a wife "by disloyalty to her husband, shall incur disgrace in this life, and be born in the next from the womb of a jackal, or be tormented with horrible diseases that punish vice."

In India, as elsewhere, the wife in ancient times was little more than a household drudge and a begetter of children, but the Hindu widow was subjected to an even more strict and severe discipline. On the death of her husband her obligation was to ascend the funeral pyre of her husband, and there to burn herself to death: for, by such an act, she would be exalted to heaven and secure her residence in another world in a region of joy for thirty-five millions of years. An additional inducement to the widow to sacrifice herself was that she was assured that her act would expiate the sins of her husband's family, which had accrued during three generations. "She will also," says one Hindu writer, "have the great merit of removing her husband from a region of torment; and expiate all his sins, although they may be of the most heinous description. If the widow declined to burn herself, she is subject to be born again in this world in the body of some female animal, and this penalty will attach to her in all successive transmigrations."

This obligation "to burn" was enjoined upon every wife except mothers of infant children, pregnant women, young girls, and women who were recovering from child-birth, and therefore regarded as "unclean" by Hindu custom.

This practice of what is popularly called "becoming suttee" was generally observed within comparatively recent times, when it was abolished in British India during the government of Lord William Bentinck by legislative enactment.

Lord Bentinck's Statute stated the position, less than a century ago, in the following terms: "The practice of suttee, or of burning or burying alive the widows of Hindus, is revolting to the feelings of human nature; it is nowhere enjoined by the religion of the Hindus as an imperative duty; on the contrary, a life of purity and retirement on the part of the widow is more especially and preferably inculcated, and by a vast majority of that people throughout India the practice is not kept up nor observed. In some

extensive districts it does not exist. In those in which it has been most frequent, it is notorious that, in many instances, acts of atrocity have been perpetrated, which have been shocking to the Hindus themselves and in their eyes unlawful and wicked."

By this enactment the practice of burying and burning alive of widows was made illegal and punishable in the criminal courts.

Writing in 1906 on the subject of suttee, Mr. William Crooke, of the Bengal Civil Service, said: "If our rule disappeared from India, it is certain the rite would be revived."

A curious confirmation of this prophecy has recently appeared in the Press.

Our domination in India appears to be slackening its grip, with the result that the following account of an attempt to revive this terrible practice appeared in a recent issue of the *Times*:

INDIAN WIDOW RESCUED FROM PYRE

From our Correspondent.

Delhi. Sept. 1. (1932)

A Brahman of Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's famous city, died on Monday. His widow was determined to commit suttee, but was dissuaded. A mob collected at her house and demanded that she should burn herself. The police locked the woman in the house, but the mob broke in and dragged the woman to the burning ghat. The mob was erecting a pyre when the police fired, killing three persons and wounding five, and rescued the woman.

It will be observed that the words of Lord Bentinck's Statute, which I have quoted, declare that in preference to suttee "a life of purity and retirement" was indicated. This implied that the widow was to devote her life to the memory of her husband. Indeed, the old Hindu Law

insisted that she should become a Vedic student and practise austerities.

An eminent Hindu lawyer has said that with very little modifications, the injunctions of the Shastras have continued to be respected even to the present times; and that widows belonging to the higher castes of the Hindus are still governed in their habits and modes of life by ordinances which were promulgated more than three or four thousand years ago; a picture of conservative ideas unique in the history of the world.

The second marriage of a widow was formerly unlawful, except where it was sanctioned by local custom, consequently it entailed the forfeiture of a widow's estate, either as being a signal instance of incontinence, or as necessarily involving degradation from caste.

In 1856 the East India Company departed from its attitude of neutrality with regard to Hindu Law, and made it lawful for Hindu widows to remarry.

The Legislature was not, however, quite satisfied that the marriage of widows was in accordance with the true interpretation of the precepts of Hindu religion, and it accordingly justified the law on the ground that it would "tend to the promotion of good morals and to the public welfare."

This Act, so important in its provisions, has remained almost a dead letter on the statute book.

A Tagore law professor thinks that the movement would probably have succeeded better if, instead of an appeal to the Legislature, which is alien in its constitution, a grand congress of the Hindus learned in the Shastras throughout the country, and representing all possible shades of opinion, had been called under the presidency of some of its respected leaders, and the orthodox nature of the measure had been established by the decision of such an assembly. Such a decision would have been, among the Hindus, what the decree of an Œcumenical Council is among the Roman Catholics, and would have been accepted by the mass of

Hindus as a genuine Shastra, and the social reform might have been carried out successfully.

The present-day position with regard to Indian widows as stated in the cold official language of the current *Indian Year Book*, is: "The proportion of widowers in the populations viz. 6·4 per cent, does not differ widely from the figure for European countries, but the number of widows is strikingly large. The large number of Indian widows is due partly to the early age of marriage, partly to the disparity in the ages of the husbands and wives, but chiefly to the prejudice against the remarriage of widows. The higher castes of Hindus forbid it altogether, and as the custom is held to be a mark of social respectability, many of the more ambitious of the lower castes have adopted it by way of raising their social status, while Mohammedans who are closely brought into touch with their Hindu neighbours, are apt to share the prejudice."

The proportion of widows at all ages in the population in European countries is about seven per cent. In India it is about seventeen per cent. This shows that there are nearly three widows in India for every one in Europe. These figures, however, do not bring out the facts. The number of widows between the ages of ten and fifteen in the West is negligible, whereas in India it is nearly two per cent. The figures are even more striking between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. In the West there is only one widow in every thousand, whereas in India there are seven.

This great army of widows in India is due, of course, to child marriage, a practice which we have seen has existed from time immemorial. But so far as educated and informed Indian opinion is concerned, the custom of child marriages, with its consequent production of baby widows, is, amongst the educated classes, more generally deplored than not; yet divergent opinions are held as to the proper means and hope of amelioration.

To-day there is no sort of doubt that, both in their

speeches and writings, Indian reformers recognize the evil and would gladly banish it from their civilization.

Mr. Gandhi himself has described it as a "brutal crime," and a writer in the *Bombay Daily Mail* in 1928 said that "the moment a young woman becomes a widow she is doomed for ever."

The attitude taken by Indian opinion has been much the same as that of the Tagore Professor I have quoted above, that the Hindu marriage being a sacrament, its validity should not be called into question by any Act of the legislature.

In relation to this point a good deal of controversy has arisen round the question of the actual age at which Hindu girls are married. In the *Journal of State Medicine* for May, 1928, Mr. Mallick attempts to clear up the point. He says that "amongst Hindus as a whole child marriage is still prevalent, though the influence of Western education and ideas, and also for economic reasons, the marriageable age of girls is going up a bit. Amongst the agricultural classes girls are married while they are only about eight years old, or even less, while in the higher castes in the rural areas the age for marriage of girls is slightly higher. In the town areas the age has gone up a little higher, and twelve may be taken as the general age. It is usual for these girls to be married to husbands who are mostly yet within their 'teens', and as a general rule they become mothers at fourteen or fifteen years of age."

The Census figures indicate that over forty-five per cent of Hindu girls enter the married state by their fifteenth year; but individual observers claim that these figures are below the mark and that a much higher percentage of Hindu girls are given in early marriage than official statistics suggest. It is generally accepted that among the great majority of the Hindu peoples, marriage is consummated at or immediately after puberty, and "the laws of human nature, together with the absolute property right given by the Hindu code to a husband over his wife, point to con-

summation and therefore to a wife's looking for motherhood, at the earliest possible moment."

Fond as they are of their children, and although many a Hindu father is as devoted to his daughters as a European, amongst the poorer class it must be admitted that the Hindu girl occupies a very insignificant place in the family as compared with her brother, and the period of childhood, as we understand it, is with her a very short one. As soon as she is at all old enough to work, she begins to take her share in the household duties, and if her parents are labouring people she is very early called upon to lend them a helping hand. The number of Hindu girls who are sent to schools, although increasing, is still but a small percentage, and the number of those who are allowed to carry on their education into its higher branches is smaller still.

The child wife, although she does not live with her husband until she is about twelve, comes much earlier under the discipline of her mother-in-law, and her life is more that of a woman than a child.

One point is overlooked by Western writers on this subject. It is this. The Indian girl, like all women in the tropics, attains sexual maturity at a much earlier age than her European sister. At twelve to fourteen she is quite ripe for sexual life, and her early marriage is necessary to prevent licence.

There is, indeed, much misconception in Europe and America as to the position of Hindu women—at any rate throughout a large part of India. The majority are out and about, working harder than the men, and cheerful as crickets. Brahman ladies may be seen any day in Western India with their heads uncovered, taking their afternoon walk with their children.

Village women have complete independence everywhere, and more than ninety per cent of the Indian women live in villages.

Only six women out of one thousand were until recent years able to read and write, and hitherto they have not

been regarded as worthy to know the sacred books of their own faith. Now all is changing and women are asserting themselves and coming to the fore in every walk of life. Women now have the franchise in all Provinces of British India, and in some Native States. Madras has a woman for its deputy chairman of Council. Bombay and Madras have women magistrates, women municipal officers, women *Justices of the Peace.*

The Punjab has gone ahead in a new direction, with its inspectors of industries. Progressive women go openly to polling booths, and are acquiring a reputation as public speakers. Perhaps it should be admitted that the speedy emancipation of women owes not a little to politics and the 'politically minded,' as they are called. More veils are discarded in Simla and Delhi in one session than during a score of years throughout all India. The men who sit in the Legislative Assemblies are beginning to realize the part that women may play in the social organization, and are anxious that their own women should be given a chance of proving themselves.

Within the abnormally short period of eleven years the Woman Suffrage movement has risen in India, swept through the country sympathetically and achieved the political enfranchisement of women in all the nine British Provinces and in four Indian States.

"Three fundamental causes have led to this remarkable success: first, the deep veneration that is given by the Hindu and Mohammedan religions to the feminine aspect of life equally with the masculine as shown by the importance of goddesses, by the necessity for the presence of the wife at all ceremonies performed by a Brahman, by the idea of the sacred mystery of womanhood implied by the purdah, and by the general veneration of motherhood. Secondly, the time was psychological, for a new era was beginning for the Indian people by the introduction of a Scheme of Reforms in Indian government which was planned to give a basis of representative government on a much

extended scale. The door was being opened to complete self-government, but only men were being invited to enter through it, although women compose half the people of the country, and it had been by the joint efforts of men and women that the agitation for reform in the government had been made. The men and women of India were too awakened and too just to allow this injustice to remain unredressed. Thirdly, the long and strenuous agitation for the vote by women in Britain and America, and their recent victories, had brought vividly to the consciousness of all educated Indian men and women the whole question of the inclusion of women in public life, and it was also a national and international necessity that Indian women should be given as high a status as women in other parts of the Empire.

"The number of women enfranchised by the grant of the vote throughout India will not be more than a million under the present qualifications. Property and not literacy is the basis of the franchise, though the grant of the vote to every graduate of seven years' standing ensures that the best educated women of the country as well as those who have to shoulder the largest property responsibilities, will be those who rightly will be the legislating influence on behalf of womanhood. As regards the custom of purdah prevailing in parts of India, special provisions have been made in Municipal voting for purdah recording stations for purdah women in which a woman is returning officer, and this has been found quite satisfactory and has been adopted also where desired in connection with Legislative Council elections."

Indeed women are playing a very active part in the present political agitation. They have, in the last two or three years, provided assistance for the Congress from unexpected quarters. Thousands of them—many being of good family and high educational attainments—suddenly emerged from the seclusion of their homes, and in some instances actually from *purdah*, in order to join Congress

demonstrations and assist in picketing; and their presence on these occasions has made the work of the police particularly unpleasant.

The state of things indicated by the verse from Kipling's "Love Song of Har Dyall" which I have placed at the head of this chapter, was true enough when the poet penned those lines.

The lot of the Hindu widow has in past years been a hard one. She has been regarded with aversion because her husband's family have persisted in believing that his death was caused by her adverse horoscope. She has been deprived of her jewels, had her head shaven, and been clothed only with a coarse white cloth. Her fastings have been long and severe, and she has not been allowed to attend any festivity, for the presence of a widow would be deemed of evil omen.

Nowadays the widow is a political entity and no longer dependent on the amiability or otherwise of her relations. Many widows have always been very kindly treated, and have often become the ruling power in the household. But to-day Indian wives, and widows as well, are a potent factor in the political game. They are in the thick of it. They have proved their powers and capacities much as the women of Europe proved theirs during the Great War. They will never go back to their old state of subservience. And it is the women who are interested in social reform, with an absorbing interest, where the men are more interested in politics.

CHAPTER XX

THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

"With us ther was a Doctour of Phisyk,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.
We coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient.
CHAUCER: *Canterbury Tales.*

MEDICINE holds a very high position in the Hindu community. It is regarded as a divine revelation, and the Vedic hymn, Yajur Veda, speaks of God as the "first Divine Physician," "who drives away all diseases."

Brahma, the first member of the Hindu Trinity, is the Father of the Hindu Healing Art. He composed a sacred medical work called the Ayur Veda, which describes the conditions tending to prolong or shorten life, and dwells on the nature of diseases, their causes and methods of treatment.

Brahma taught the Ashvini Kumars, the twin brothers referred to in a previous chapter, who wrote important works on medicine and surgery, and were the divine physicians. Many hymns in the Rig Veda are addressed to these twin gods, from which it appears that medicine and surgery were fully appreciated by the ancients, and held in high esteem by them.

The Ashvini are reputed to have given new teeth to one god, new eyes to another, and to have cured a third of consumption!

The author of the most ancient Hindu work on medicine was Charaka, who is said to have been an incarnation of Shesha—the Serpent-god with a thousand heads—who is supposed to be the depository of all sciences, especially of medicine.

Sushruta, the first writer on Hindu surgery, was, like Charaka, an incarnation of a Hindu divinity. His work was translated into Arabic before the end of the eighth century. It has been translated into Latin by Hepler and into German by Vullers. Charaka was also translated from Sanskrit into Arabic in the beginning of the eighth century, and "his name repeatedly occurs in the Latin translations of Avicenna, Razes, and Serapion" (Hunter).

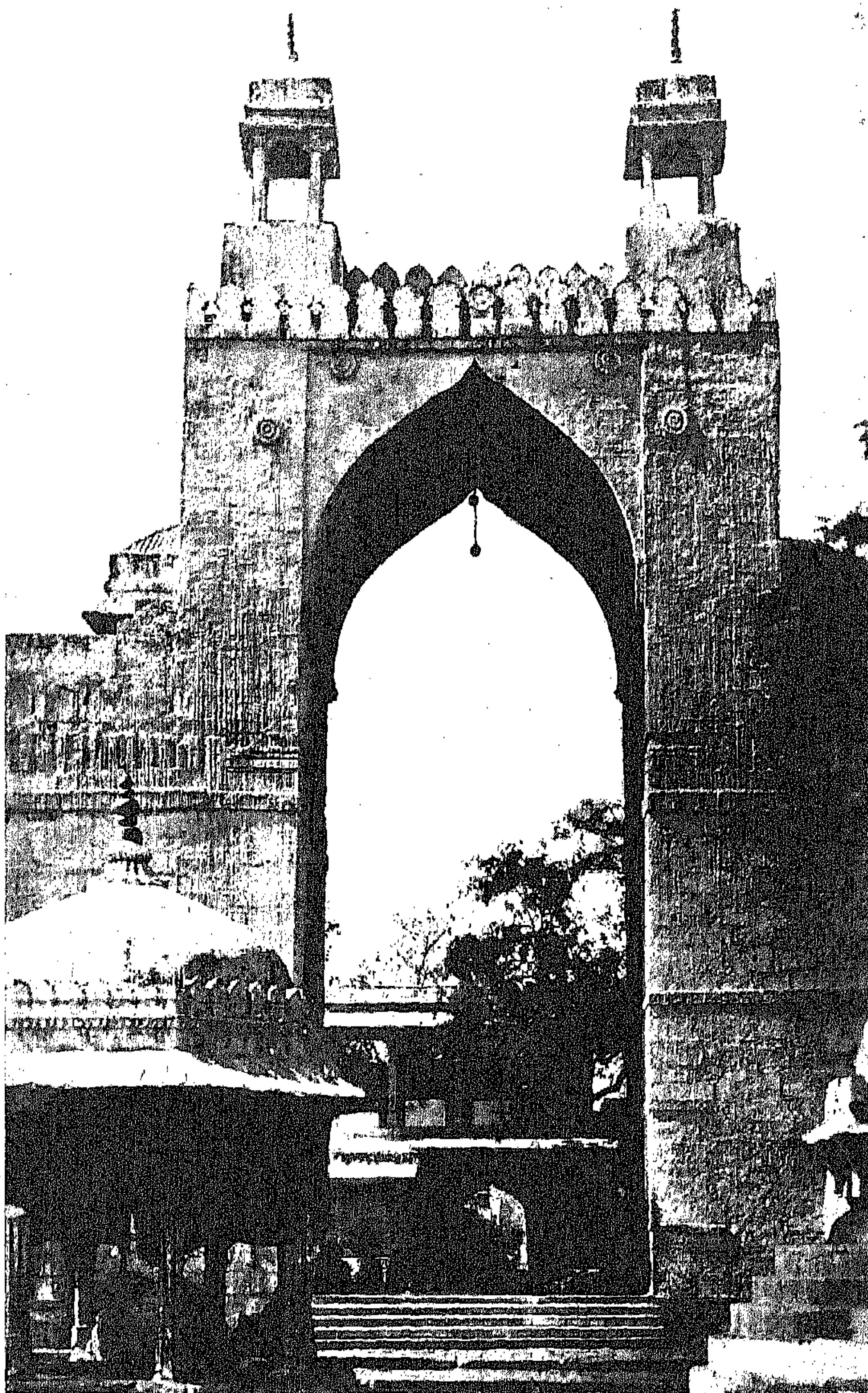
In view of the great antiquity of Hindu medicine, it is not surprising to find that as far back as the time of Asoka, physicians held an honoured place in Indian Society. Writing of this period, Megasthenes says that "the physicians were well-nigh as highly esteemed as the ascetics." He adds that "by their knowledge of pharmacy they can make marriages fruitful, and determine the sex of the offspring. They effect cures rather by regulating the diet than by the use of medicines. The remedies most esteemed are ointments and plasters. All others they consider to be in a great measure pernicious in their nature."

The sacrificial animals gave the ancient Hindus opportunities for studying comparative anatomy, and the Buddhistic kings opened hospitals for animals and encouraged further study and specialization in veterinary medicine and surgery.

In the earlier centuries of the Christian era Hindu medicine was in the heyday of its glory. Every important town could then boast of one or more medical schools, the pupils at which used to accompany their teachers to the jungles to identify for themselves the various drugs mentioned in their books. The physicians, in their laborious researches, were very liberally encouraged by the ruling chiefs—great

and small—in all parts of the country. So long as they continued to receive encouragement from the kings, the science prospered and flourished. The decline of Aryan medicine dates from the Mohammedan invasions in the tenth century. The minds of both princes and people were distracted by these foreign intruders. They were chiefly engrossed in taking measures for opposing the invaders. It was only natural that during such a state of unrest and disorder, the native Vaidyas should slacken their zeal for making further investigations in the Indian flora, for want of encouragement. Far from being able to follow up the practical part of their study, they had to rest content with the theoretical knowledge imparted by their books, and to depend on ordinary grocers for the supply of drugs required for their nostrums. When the Mohammedan power was firmly established in India, Indian medicine received a rude shock. For the Mohammedans brought with them their own physicians, called Hakims, who followed in their practice the Greek system of medicine, generally termed "Yunani." Under Imperial patronage the Hakims began to prosper at the expense of the Vaidyas. "But even at the Mohammedan Courts the Vaidyas are recorded to have cured many intractable diseases, which had baffled the skill of their foreign rivals."

In the chaos which characterized the fall of the Moghul Empire, the revered science of medicine sank to a low ebb, and we find Sleeman writing in 1844 that "in travelling over India there is nothing which distresses a benevolent man so much as the necessity he is daily under of telling poor parents, who, with aching hearts and tearful eyes, approach him with their suffering children in their arms, that to relieve them requires time and means which are not at a traveller's command, or a species of knowledge which he does not possess: it is bitter thus to dash to the ground the cup of hope which our approach has raised to the lip of mother, father, and child; but he consoles himself with the prospect that at no distant period a benevolent and



[Photo: Indian State Railways

THE GREAT GATEWAY, AJMERE, RAJPUTANA
A superb example of Indian Architecture.

[Face page 214



[Photo: Indian State Railways

A Clever Craftsman in Ivory at Delhi

Face page 215]

enlightened Government will distribute over the land those from whom the afflicted will not seek relief in vain."

Much has been done since Sleeman's time, and every effort has been made to provide India with hospitals and dispensaries staffed by doctors educated on Western lines; yet side by side with these innovations the old systems of medicine have survived. The result is that there is no country in the world where the profession of medicine is more heterogeneously represented than in India. Medical and surgical treatment is carried out by persons who range from the most highly-qualified and competent exponents of Western methods, many of whom have held important hospital appointments in Great Britain, to mystics who adopt the ancient systems of treatment of the Hindu sages, and descendants of the men who ministered to the ailments of Akbar.

Turning first to the medical organization introduced by British administrators, it is necessary to remind the reader that throughout the British Commonwealth of nations a definite standard of medical education is laid down by a supreme authority appointed by each State; and although numerous bodies grant qualifications to practise, they are bound to conduct their examinations according to a prescribed standard, and must see that all students pass through a curriculum which is practically the same for both the universities and the great medical corporations.

In other parts of the British Empire a Medical *College* and a Medical *School* are synonymous terms, but in India a sharp line is drawn between the two.

The Indian Medical *Colleges* are connected with the various universities and, generally speaking, they give a full curriculum acceptable to the Home country and the Dominions.

To the students of the Colleges the Indian universities grant degrees which are for the most part registrable throughout the British Empire.

The Medical *Schools* are quite independent of the Indian universities. Their standard of education is lower, the curriculum less elaborate, and the duration of training is shorter. They grant diplomas to their students which are recognized qualifications to practise in India but not elsewhere.

In view of the history of the growth of the British supremacy it is not surprising to find Indian medical organizations based on military lines and military doctors at the head of every branch of medical work. The medical care of the British Army in India, as elsewhere, is in the hands of the R.A.M.C., and the officers of that Corps are also employed in a number of civil, or quasi-civil, appointments; but up till comparatively recently the best of all medical practice from Peshawar to Cape Comorin was in the hands of the Indian Medical Service, which had started at the very beginning of the operations of the Company of Merchant Adventurers trading to the East Indies. Its numbers grew as the commercial and military activities of "John Company" expanded, and its officers played an important part in both diplomatic work and in the expansion of the Company's trade. Dr. Gabriel Boughton accompanied a mission from Surat to the Court of the Moghul Emperor Shah Jehan, and when in the service of the Moghul Viceroy, Boughton obtained permission for the Company to import goods into Bengal duty free.

Another member of the Company's Medical Service, Dr. William Hamilton, accompanied a mission to Delhi seventy years later, and his surgical skill brought the Company into favour and largely contributed to the success of the mission.

At the capture of Calcutta in 1756, when Drake fled from his post, Dr. Holwell took command of the garrison and was one of the survivors of the Black Hole.

Later Holwell became for a short time Governor of Bengal.

Another I.M.S. doctor, Sir John O'Neill, became Minister Plenipotentiary to Persia, and, indeed, medical officers

have played an important part in very many non-medical spheres in India.

In later years this grand old Service has ceased providing governors to provinces and ambassadors to the Foreign Office, but it has provided the Indian people with a fine body of physicians, surgeons, and research workers. In India to this day a military title is a guarantee of efficiency, and Indians who have held temporary commissions in the I.M.S. usually retain their military titles, which are regarded by both them and their patients as more important than mere academic distinctions.

The Indian Medical Service commenced as a purely European Service, but Indians have been admitted for the past forty years and they have gradually attained to a large percentage of its personnel. Its members, like the officers of all arms of the Indian army, have always been employed both in military and civil appointments. But European doctors are expensive and it became necessary to recruit personnel who would carry out the less important branches of medical work. So the Indian Medical Department came into existence. This Department consists of the Military Assistant Surgeons and Military Sub-Assistant Surgeons. The Military Assistant Surgeons, formerly known as Apothecaries, are recruited from the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian population. Recruits are sent to one of the Medical Colleges, and are educated at the public expense. The duration of their curriculum is four years, and on passing the final examination of one of the Provincial medical licensing bodies, they are gazetted as warrant officers, a similar rank to that of sergeant-majors and band-masters.

In return for their free medical training, the Government insists on at least seven years' service before taking their discharge, or a refund of a portion of the money spent on their training.

Military Assistant Surgeons carry out minor medical work in the British Military Hospitals and act as dressers, compounders, stewards, ward-masters, and quarter-masters.

They gradually qualify for civil employment, where they act as assistants to commissioned civil surgeons or hold independent medical charges themselves.

In addition to this useful body of Anglo-Indians, as the Eurasians are now styled, there is a similar corps of Indians known as military sub-assistant surgeons, formerly styled Hospital Assistants. They are recruited at certain Medical *Schools* from Indian youths who have passed a matriculation or similar educational test. They are enrolled under the Indian Army Acts and during their medical training are under military law. They are educated free and receive a small salary from the beginning of their training. They get a four years' course and must pass the examination of one of the Indian licensing bodies qualifying them for registration.

Like the military assistant surgeons, they "sign on" for seven years, and perform for Indian troops exactly similar duties to those performed for British troops by their Anglo-Indian compeers.

Like the assistant surgeons, they are eligible for civil employment, in which they occupy a variety of less important professional posts.

So much for the soldiers. The Civil Medical Services are under the control of the Surgeon-General with the Supreme Government, who is Director-General of the Indian Medical Service.

Each Province, or administrative area, has a certain number of doctors allotted to it, with at their head a military medical officer styled "Surgeon-General with the Government" in Bengal, Bombay and Madras, and "Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals" in all the other provinces.

The Surgeon-General, or Inspector-General, is the adviser of his Government on all medical matters connected with his Province, and is responsible for the supervision of all medical institutions. He commands the military and civil doctors of the province and distributes and recruits the non-commissioned personnel at his pleasure. He has under him

a varying number of officers of the I.M.S., civil and military assistant surgeons and sub-assistant surgeons.

The Provinces are divided into districts, and at each district headquarters is a civil surgeon who is assisted by a civil assistant surgeon and one or more civil sub-assistant surgeons. Up till comparatively lately professorial appointments in the Medical Colleges and practically all important civil surgeoncies, were a monopoly of the European commissioned officers, but Indian military surgeons, civil assistant surgeons, and Indian private practitioners with British qualifications, are obtaining these appointments in larger numbers every year. The minor civil surgeoncies are all held by civil and military assistant surgeons.

Much, indeed most, of the civil work is done by two classes of Government officers, who correspond in the civil medical services with the military assistant surgeons and sub-assistant surgeons of the Indian Medical Department. They are styled Civil Assistant Surgeons and Civil Sub-Assistant Surgeons.

The civil assistant surgeon branch is composed of graduates of one or other of the Indian universities. These gentlemen are eligible for all Government medical posts.

It is a curious fact that appointments as house physician and house surgeon in the large Indian hospitals are not held by junior practitioners gaining experience, as in this country, but by members of this class or military assistant surgeons in civil employment, who often hold these House appointments for years on end.

The civil sub-assistant surgeons are Indians who have been educated in one of the provincial medical *schools* and have obtained a license to practise.

They are placed in charge of police, serve in jails, lunatic asylums, and railway hospitals; and hold a vast variety of minor medical appointments under their local governments. Indeed, these men carry out the bulk of medical practice amongst the poorer classes in the country districts.

In addition to the medical men in Government service there is a large body of independent medical practitioners, some of whom have gone through a complete curriculum in either America or the United Kingdom, and obtained degrees from famous universities. A number of these gentlemen have held important hospital appointments in Europe and are gradually replacing I.M.S. officers on the teaching staffs of the Indian colleges.

The number of Europeans practising independently is not great, and they are chiefly to be found in Calcutta, but some of the railways have small but complete European Services, and various manufacturing companies and the tea gardens employ a large number of medical men imported from Europe and America. In addition, there is a considerable body of medical missionaries, including the medical service of the Salvation Army.

There is an increasing tendency for Indian women to take up medicine as a profession, with the result that there are women pupils in all the medical colleges and medical schools in India, as there is a large demand for women doctors throughout the country, from public bodies such as municipalities, district boards, and in the larger provincial and Zenana hospitals.

What is known as "The Women's Medical Service for India" is not a State Service but is included in the "National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India," generally known as the Countess of Dufferin's Fund, and is administered by the Council of that Fund.

This, as briefly as may be, is the present position of Western medicine in India, but the practitioners of modern methods, numbering as they do thirty or forty thousand, are a mere fraction of the professors of healing in India. Side by side with the development of new methods and modern hospitals, the old systems referred to above have continued to flourish.

Indeed for some years past there has been in certain quarters a revolt against Western medicine. In India,

therefore, the account of Chaucer's physician which forms the text of this chapter, has special interest, for this medieval "Doctour of Phisyk" practised what was to all intents and purposes the methods of the adherents of what are called the indigenous systems of medicine in India.

In Chaucer's England the practice of physicians was based on that of the Arabs, who, after the first period of Mohammedan conquest was over, had settled down to be a learned nation, taking over the learning of Greece and Rome as part of their conquests in the West, and much Indian lore as part of their conquests in the East. The Eastern additions to the knowledge of the period was chiefly in relation to astrology and magic, and the importance allotted to these branches of scholarship in medieval England is indicated by a good grounding in astrology being placed first among the qualifications of Chaucer's physician. The pilgrim physician

> knew the cause of everich maladye,
> Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,
> And where engendred, and of what humour.

These represent an early blend of Greek and Egyptian medicine.

The Greek philosophers had evolved a theory of elementary contraries of heat, cold, moist and dry, and on these foundations built up conceptions of health and disease.

The healthy body was believed to possess these elementary contraries in correct proportions, whereas in disease the body lacked, or held an excess of, one or other of the elements.

These ancient Greek theories of the nature of health and disease have descended practically intact to the Indian *hakim*, or practitioner of the Moslem system of medicine.

Additional to practising ancient Greek medicine, the hakim claims as his authority Ipocrat, or Hippocrates, which gives him another link with Chaucer's physician, for

"Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen."

Moreover, like Chaucer's pilgrim, the hakim loves vegetable drugs.

"Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
For each of hem made other for to winne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to beginne."

The Hindu healers, called vaidyas, baids or vaids, are partial to organic salts and base their system on a theory that there are three pervading humours or forces in the body—wind, bile and phlegm, and while these humours are in proper equilibrium the body remains in health.

These "humours" convey more to the Hindu mind than their English equivalents suggest, as they control all the vital functions of the body. Wind predominates in old age, bile in middle age, and phlegm in childhood. Evening is the time for the predominance of wind, and noon and morning for the prevalence of bile and phlegm respectively. Similarly, the influence of wind is great after the food in the stomach is digested; when the action of the stomach is half done, or when the food is in a semi-digested state, bile gets the ascendency, and phlegm holds sway in the commencement of the process of digestion. When wind predominates, digestion becomes irregular; when bile is abundant, it is accelerated; under the controlling influence of phlegm, digestion becomes weak. For perfect digestion the three humours must be in their proper proportion. If wind is predominant the bowels become costive; when bile is in excess they become loose; when phlegm predominates, the bowels remain in their normal condition.

It is thought that Hippocrates himself brought this doctrine of humours to Greece, but it clashed with Greek theories of the four elements of the natural world. The Hippocratic school accordingly remodelled it, replacing wind by blood and subdividing bile. These changes having been made, the harmonising of two differing conceptions of the origin of disease became possible.

This alloy of medical theories of East and West probably first formed in the Hippocratic school passed to Chaucer's physician through the Arabs. Armed with these theories he distinguished two grades of human ills, the distempers and diseases, the former due to incorrect mixture of the humours, the latter due to changes in their composition.

These ancient medical theories are enshrined everywhere in English literature. Not a play of Shakespeare can be read without meeting them, and in modern English it is nearly impossible to pay our respects to anyone's character without using expressions borrowed from the language of the old medical schools.

From these medical physicians we have inherited the expressions to be in good or bad "humour," and on the excess of one humour or other our temperaments depend. The person who possesses blood in excess is said to be "sanguine"; those who have too much black bile are melancholy; while to possess phlegm in excess makes us phlegmatic.

The Indian physicians have at their disposal a very extensive indigenous *materia medica* and pay special attention to the effect of the seasons upon plants, the various localities and circumstances in which they develop their distinctive properties, the influence upon them of the sun and moon, and the exact period at which they should be gathered. They consider medicines to be either "hot" or "cold" in power according to the influence of the sun or moon.

According to the Hindus, the seasons from January to June are those during which the sun exerts a less beneficial influence upon the vegetable kingdom, sucking up the

juices of plants and giving them "heating" properties. On the other hand, from July to December the sun's rays produce a "cooling" effect on herbs.

It is claimed that the ancient Hindus were the first to dissect the human body for the study of anatomy, and surgery was practised in Hindu India in very ancient times, but "gradually declined owing to a variety of causes, the chief among them being the aversion of the Brahmans, who had the monopoly of teaching the various sciences, to animal food and to the sacrificial offerings which were too common in the pre-Buddhistic period. This aversion made them shrink from touching the carcases necessary for anatomical demonstrations. They also shrank from coming in contact with blood, pus, and other matter, which cannot be avoided in performing surgical operations. Surgery being neglected by the priestly caste, passed into the hands of the lower classes, whose practice was purely empirical. Even these people, for want of encouragement, *allowed it to decline, until, as Mr. Elphinstone rightly* remarks, bleeding was left to the barber, bone-setting to the herdsman, and the application of blisters to every man."

When we turn to questions of hygiene we find that modern Hindu medicine is in agreement with Chaucer's physician, of whom the poet writes:

> "Of his diete mesurable was he,
> For it was of no superfluitee,
> But of greet norrissing and digestible."

Two meals a day, one at morning and the other at evening, are always prescribed, and "govern thy appetite" has always been one of the Hindu's cardinal maxims. "He that is devoid of wisdom," says the *Mahabharata*, "desireth much food." Hindu physicians say that half the space in the stomach should be filled with food, a quarter with water, and the rest left empty.

Long before the importance of clean mouths was appreciated in Europe, cleansing the teeth was strongly advocated by the Hindus. Patients are told that after meals the mouth should be carefully washed, and the wet hands passed over the eyes with the object of improving the sight. To walk a little way after meals aids digestion, and then, after the walk, Hindu doctors recommend resting for a while on the left side. Massage is another very favourite remedy of the Hindus both in bodily and mental ailments, and seems to have been generally employed from the earliest ages. Hindu physicians also advise the drinking of a certain quantity of water daily at sunrise as an aid to health and longevity.

The Vaids believe in regular sleep and early rising, and they teach various peculiar modes of breathing to induce sleep without the use of narcotics.

Garrison, in a recent paper to the New York Academy of Medicine, speaks of his esteem for Indian medicine based as it is upon important scientific principles, such as a rational system of vegetarian dietetics, regular bathing, attention to clothing, respiratory gymnastics, and domestic and personal hygiene and self-purification, as laid down in the Laws of Manu. He refers to the knowledge by ancient Hindu writers of the localisation of bubonic plague in rats, and their acquaintance with such modern "discoveries" as the importance of mosquitoes as vectors of malaria.

To-day, however, both vaids and hakims are, like our old English apothecaries, essentially compounders of drugs, which they also prescribe. They know of some relieving simple for each minor ill of life, but when they meet the major illness their lack of training must sometimes result in disaster.

Indian reformers may, and indeed do, desire to replace them by better trained men, but the fact has to be faced that trained men are not available, so these practitioners of ancient systems serve a useful purpose, as they provide

some sort of medical service for the teeming millions of India.

What should be realized by educated Indians is that the West practised a modified combination of both Hindu and Moslem medicine for centuries, and then discarded them for something better, just as it discarded "wooden walls" for the ironclad, or the stage coach for the railway train.

The Professor of Physiology in Lucknow Medical College sums the position up when he says: "Scientific medicine will always be proud to acknowledge Hippocrates as its father, and to accord Galen a pedestal beside him. They were great men, but belonged to a past, and admiration for their past greatness no more leads science to do exactly as they did than admiration for Nelson is regarded as a reason for building and arming ships just as they were in the days of Trafalgar.

Similarly with Charaka and Susruta, they were great men, but now belong to history. It is no discredit to Charaka, Susruta and Hippocrates, that they knew so little of anatomy and physiology and nothing of bacteriology, X-rays and other modern sciences. What they knew was entirely to their credit, and it made them richer in that knowledge than any of their contemporaries or predecessors. Nor is it to their discredit that since their time there has been such an accumulation of knowledge that their wealth is now but pauperism. It is, however, as foolish to attempt to modernize them as it would be to arm soldiers with finely tempered leaf steel bows and aluminium arrows when modern rifles are available. These ancients did not write inspired puzzles for succeeding generations to solve, but just what they knew. They did not build palaces to endure for ever, but buildings that were marvellous for their age. We can admire and protect what is left of what they built, as relics, not as habitations."

There is much that is excellent in India's indigenous systems of medicine, but their practitioners have a long

way to go before their practice is placed on the level of modern scientific workers.

Let me close with another reference to the medieval prototype of India's medicine men:

"In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;
And yet he was but esy of dispence;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therefore he lovede gold in special."

His Highness the Thakore Sahib of Gondal, one of the ruling princes of Kathiawar, and himself a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, tells us the Hindu physician should have his nails pared and his hair dressed, should have clean clothes, and carry a stick or an umbrella in his hand, wear shoes, and have a gentlemanly bearing. He must be pure-minded, guileless, pious, friendly to all, and devoted to truth and duty. His chief duty is to treat his patient honestly, and without desire of any gain. To treat a patient conscientiously is supposed to bring "merit" (Punya) to the physician, who should not therefore sell his "Virtue" by treating a poor patient for the love of lucre. For the sake of his livelihood he will be justified in expecting an adequate fee from well-to-do people. He who is in a position to pay his doctor's fee but does not, though under his medical treatment, is styled "wicked," and is said to transfer all his "merit" to the physician. A religious sentiment appears to have been attached to the question of payment. For the Hindus are enjoined not to approach or interview a king, a preceptor, and a physician "empty-handed," that is, without a gift or offering.

CHAPTER XXI

DRINK AND DRUGS

"Over the edge of the purple down,
Where the single lamplight gleams,
Know ye the road to the Merciful Town
That is hard by the Sea of Dreams—
Where the poor may lay their wrongs away,
And the sick may forget to weep?"

KIPLING.

THE drink problem, as visualised by Western reformers, is almost unknown in India, save in those few places where heavy concentrations of industrial labour occur. This fact is explained by the general reprobation in which indulgence in strong drink—as distinguished from indulgence in drugs—is held among the Indian people.

But it must not be imagined that certain sections of the Indian community are not partial to ordinary alcoholic beverages. I remember getting the shock of my life in the early 'nineties when I found my Kahar bearer—an imposing person with credentials in the way of "chits" which would have secured him service in the Viceregal household—dead drunk under my dining-room table, with a whisky bottle clutched in his hand. Later on I was almost equally astonished to find that a bottle of whisky went a very short way with some of my Hindu friends, and that a famous Sikh Maharajah drank himself to death on "Raja's Peg," which consisted of champagne plentifully "laced" with brandy.

Temperance reformers are fond of asserting that the traffic in intoxicating liquors is one of the many malign influences they attribute to the British rule. This is utter nonsense, as there is ample evidence that centuries before

the arrival of the English, spirit-drinking was not only common but the sale of alcoholic beverages actually used by native rulers as a source of revenue.

Apart altogether from imported wine, beer and spirits, a large amount of country spirit is made in India by distillation from the Mhowra flower, molasses and other forms of unrefined sugar, and from fermented palm juice and rice. A good deal of this spirit is modified in various ways and sold as Indian brandy, whisky and rum, but better brands of these so-called whiskies and brandies are distilled from grape-juice by various private firms. Country beer is also largely manufactured, and a light variety is manufactured by various breweries in the Hills and is deservedly popular with the "other ranks" of the British army and other European and Anglo-Indian residents.

In Madras the favourite beverage is toddy, which is the sap of the date, palmyra, and coconut palms. It is drunk either fresh or after fermentation, and the Government revenue in Madras and Bombay is secured by not only shop licenses but by a fixed fee on every tree from which it is proposed to draw the sap.

Up till about a quarter of a century ago the control of the Government over distilling was distinctly crude. Methods inherited from native administration were in force, which it had been difficult to adapt to modern conditions owing to political or other reasons. There were, for instance, aboriginal tribes who regarded the making of their own "drinks" as a long-established right, and believed that liquor poured as libations to their gods should be prepared by their own hands.

Nowadays the excise control of distilleries has been thoroughly tightened up and limitation of licenses and gradual enhancement of taxation is doing a great deal to check, or at any rate, to limit consumption.

The aim of the Government is not prohibition, as a recent Blue Book points out that in the Madras Presidency, for example, a man with a knife and a pot can get as much

toddy as he desires, once he comes within reach of a palm-tree, whilst a thorough-going attempt to check distillation entirely in the Sikh districts of the Punjab would require the magnifying to many dimensions of the existing Punjab Police and Excise Departments. The same can be said of other provinces. The Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee Report makes some very important comments on the cost to India of an attempt to enforce prohibition, and recent American experience of the thorny problem is not without interest.

To a very large extent the use of certain drugs takes the place of alcohol in Indian social life. The principal drugs used are hemp and opium. Indian hemp has been employed for centuries as *facile princeps* the favourite intoxicant in several Eastern countries. The Arabic name for the drug is hashish, or hasheesh, and the English word "assassin" is probably derived from the Arabic "hashishin", which signifies eaters of hemp, as these drug addicts were notorious for committing homicide whilst under the influence of the drug. This powerful plant is found in three forms in the Indian bazaars. The dried leaves and stalks are known as *bhang*, the flowering tops as *ganja*. Formerly the resin which exuded from the leaves and branches, known as *charas*, was largely sold, but its sale has been prohibited in some districts for many years past. All three products are used in the preparation of a popular sweetmeat called *majan*.

"In large doses hemp acts on the brain, producing excitement and often hallucinations, but in small doses either smoked or taken by the mouth, it causes pleasurable sensations with gay, joyful and exalted ideas and a refreshed feeling, particularly after bodily or mental fatigue. Under its influence the knowledge of time and personality is lost. Should it be continued, it causes intoxication and loss of self-control. The drugged man becomes very talkative and laughs at everything, passing into a sort of 'waking delirium.' The delirium, generally noisy and restless, is accompanied



TAPPING A TODDY PALM
Ready-made Refreshment

[*Face page* 230



A THAKUR BEAUTY

Face page 231]

by muscular excitement, and is followed by sleep, which is often attended with delightful dreams."

The learned Indian authority on *materia medica*, from whose excellent book the above quotation is taken, adds that the drug acts as an aphrodisiac and that a cold infusion of leaves and fruits with aromatics is daily indulged in by most of the people of the United Provinces without much deleterious effect.

Poisoning from hemp is very rare and as in the case of alcohol and opium, a tolerance is soon established, so that hemp habitués can smoke half an ounce daily without apparent ill effects.

Turning to the question of opium, the *Indian Year Book* says: "Mention opium and half the Western world directs its thoughts to India, as though India were a most unscrupulous producer of the most noxious drug on earth. Refer to the League of Nations' proceedings in regard to opium and again, mainly under the leadership of American representatives, one finds India and the Government of India held up to humanity as traffickers in opium and as thereby obstacles to making the world a better place to live in. In fact, neither India nor the Government of India has anything to be ashamed of in its opium history. Whatever may be the case in other countries, centuries of inherited experience have taught the people of India discretion in the use of the drug and its misuse is a negligible feature in Indian life. Abuse of its properties is rarer in India than the abuse of alcohol in Western countries."

There is indeed a great deal of misconception with regard to the use of the drug. It is rarely smoked in India, but on the other hand, the eating of opium is fairly common and it is freely used by the people for medicinal purposes. A paragraph in Sir Michael O'Dwyer's book *India as I Knew It*, contains some interesting remarks on the opium eating habit.

"The Opium Commission, of which Lord Brassey was President, was in 1893 sitting at Lahore, and Lord Brassey

and his son (the late T. A. Brassey), with whom I had been at Balliol, were staying at Government House. I drove down with them one afternoon to a sitting of the Commission. On the way we ran into a pedestrian who was a bit shaken. Lord Brassey was much concerned and asked what remedy could be applied. A burly Punjabi policeman who had come to our aid gave his opinion very decidedly in broad patois. Lord Brassey asked me to translate. The advice was, 'Give him a pill or two of opium; it never harmed man or beast.'

"On the same occasion, to my great confusion, my faithful body-servant, who had been too hospitably entertained by his friends at Lahore, showed himself the worse for liquor and was rather noisy in the verandah of the 'Lat Sahib' (Lieutenant-Governor). I told my Sikh orderly to get him out of the way till he was sober. This he did but he whispered confidentially, 'This disgrace would have been avoided if the fool would only take opium instead of strong drink.' I have always regarded opium-eating, and still more opium-smoking, as much more harmful than drink. But I must acknowledge that in some of the appalling epidemics (one was in 1894) I found that the Sikh peasantry, who habitually take a small dose of opium in the malarial season, were generally immune, and brisk and active, while their Hindu and Mohammedan neighbours, who eschewed opium, were prostrate almost to a man. I related my experience to Lord Brassey, but do not know if he attached any weight to it in his report."

My own experience confirms that of Sir Michael. I had an excellent Mussulman table servant with me in Kashmir and it was well known that he was an *afimi*, that is an opium eater, but he was always alert and up to his work. Unfortunately he lost his supply of opium during a long march and on arrival in camp was prostrate. Fortunately I had some laudanum with me, and after a stiff dose he was up and about, helping to pitch camp and get dinner ready.

The use of opium to prevent chills so popular with Indians is followed by many British doctors. Personally I never failed to have a grain of opium after a long day after snipe, and never had a chill, although I often had a long drive home from the jhils, as the bogs are called in India.

An All India Conference held in 1930, concluded that only certain parts of Assam and Calcutta could correctly be regarded as having excessive consumption of opium, and that Orissa and the Ferozepore District of the Punjab might perhaps provide cases for further inquiry. All over the rest of India the Conference considered that there was no evidence of prevalent excess and they produced evidence to show that there are simple explanations showing harmless causes for what appeared to be excessive consumption in many places.

With restrictions on the use of opium has appeared a much worse habit. Opium is an indigenous drug of great antiquity, but the coca plant, although it is cultivated to a considerable extent in Java, has never been grown commercially in India, so that the alkaloid produced from it and known as cocaine, is in origin entirely a Western product. It was not till early in the present century that cocaine was labelled as an intoxicating drug by the Indian Courts of law, yet during the last quarter of a century the traffic in cocaine has grown to alarming proportions, and its use is now widespread throughout the Empire. The consumers are to be found in all classes of society, and in Burma even school children are reported to be its victims; but in India as in Paris the drug is mostly used by prostitutes or by men as an aphrodisiac. The habit has spread chiefly to those classes which are prohibited by religion or caste rules from partaking of liquor and the well-known Indian intoxicating drugs.

The drug is imported into India almost entirely from Germany, Japan and America, so the supply of this drug to its addicts is one of the few things which the Anglophobe cannot lay to the door of the British connection.

Being barred to ordinary importation, except for medical purposes, the cocaine maniacs of India obtain their supplies through smugglers who display great ingenuity in their nefarious traffic. The drug is very artfully secreted in parcels of newspapers, books, toys and piece goods, and in trunks with secret compartments. The retail distribution is carried out at various centres throughout the country, the Imperial entrepôt of Delhi being notoriously active in this respect. The trade is very profitable and it has been worth the distributors' while to organise an elaborate system of watchmen and patrols who shadow the Excise and police officers and give timely warning of raids.

It was at one time possible to buy cocaine from any seller of betel-nut, but the activities of the authorities have been so great that the sale of the drug has been heavily restricted.

Unfortunately comparative scarcity has increased the profits of smugglers and retailers, with the result that the drug addicts probably find no difficulty in obtaining their dope, at, of course, an enhanced price.

It is regrettable that European seamen lend themselves to this illicit traffic, but satisfactory to note that very few of the smugglers are British. It may be interesting to close this chapter with a brief reference to the Report of a Drugs Enquiry Committe which sat in India during the years 1930–31.

Commenting on this Report, the *British Medical Journal* says the Report of the Drugs Commission of the Government of India recently issued discloses a deplorable condition of affairs in India, where there are practically no laws to guarantee the purity of drugs or regulate their sale. The report gives a vivid description of the consequences of this freedom. The country is stated to be the dumping ground for every variety of quack medicine and adulterated drug manufactured in all parts of the world, these being sold by unqualified chemists who are themselves a public danger. It is interesting to note that the committee received

abundant evidence that the absence of protective laws resulted in India receiving drugs that had been condemned in other countries, and it was even suggested that drugs of a specially low quality were prepared for the Indian market. International trade appears to be so well organised that any country whose legislation is backward does not merely receive a certain amount of material of inferior quality, but gets *all* the inferior material that is floating round the world. This was the situation that led the Government of India to appoint, in 1930, a small but strong committee to consider the steps necessary to ensure that the country obtained a supply of reliable drugs.

The section of the inquiry that deals with quinine policy is of particular interest. The general position is that India consumes about 200,000 pounds of quinine annually, while its real need is at least five times this quantity. Moreover, some of the most malarious districts in the country show the lowest quinine consumption. The reason for this is that "quinine is the rich man's remedy, while malaria is the poor man's heritage." The syndicate known as the Kina Bureau operated with such success that it managed, during the world-wide depression prior to the date of the report, to keep the price of quinine stable. But this remarkable commercial success did not assist the fight against malaria, and the report suggests that the obvious duty of the Indian Government is to find the cheapest effective cinchona derivative and to sell it at the lowest possible price.

The Committee courageously faced the problem of the indigenous systems of medicine and were confronted by the assertion of the vaidyas and hakims that the virtues of their preparations were far too subtle to be controlled by the crude tests of Western science. Such an assertion renders difficult any attempts to establish standards of purity. Investigation showed that many of these drugs were adulterated and of poor quality, and that some of the remedies used were potent and toxic substances over

which control was essential. It is recommended that these drugs should be brought under some control, but that regulation of the drugs of the Ayurvedic and Unani schools should be entirely separated from that of the drugs used in Western medicine.

It is obvious from what I have said that if India has not got the drink problem in an acute form, it has difficulties in relation to drugs which are of considerable magnitude.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MOTHER LODGE OUT THERE

"Outside—'Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!'
Inside—'Brother,' an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother-Lodge out there!"

KIPLING'S famous poem from which the title of this chapter is taken, is known to everyone and is quoted by Freemasons the world over, but few realize how the works of our greatest living author are saturated with the spirit of Masonry and the Masonic ritual.

Sometimes his allusions are casual. One of his poems "The Men that fought at Minden" has the sub-title "In the Lodge of Instruction." "The Widow at Windsor" has the chorus:

"Then 'ere's to the Lodge o' the Widow,
From the Poles to the Tropics it runs—
To the Lodge that we tile with the rank an' the file,
An' open in form with the guns."

In a story, "The Dog Hervey," there is this incident:

"A tremor shook him, and he put his hand on my knee, and whispered with great meaning: 'I'll letter or halve it with you. There! You begin'."

Kipling found an American Mason in a Boer Prisoners of War Camp, but amongst his older prose writings his references to the Grand Lodge and Clearance Certificates of Kim's father are perhaps the best known.

He has made everyone in this country familiar with the name by which the masonic lodge buildings which are to be found in all parts of India are known to the rank and file of the Indian people. The term is the *Jadhu Ghar*—the House of Spells or Magic.

It will be remembered that Kipling says, "If Kim's father's woman had sent Kim up to the local Jadoo-Gher with those papers, he would, of course, have been taken over by the Provincial Lodge, and sent to the Masonic Orphanage in the Hills: but what she had heard of magic she distrusted. Kim, too, held views of his own."

The most masonic of Kipling's Indian short stories is *The Man Who Would Be King*. His hero who turns up maimed, disfigured and nearly demented, tells an amazing story of exploits amongst one of the tribes on the Afghan border. He tells us that his fellow adventurer discovered that the Chiefs and Priests of the tribe could work a Fellow Craft Lodge, to use his own words, "in a way that's very like ours, and they've cut the marks on the rocks, but they don't know the Third Degree, and they've come to find out. It's Gord's Truth. I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the Fellow Craft degree, but this is a miracle. A god and a Grand-Master of the Craft am I, and a Lodge in the Third Degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priest and the Chiefs of the villages."

Aprons were made by the priests' families and there is a real Kipling touch when we are told that for the master's apron "the blue border and marks was made of turquoise lumps on white hide, not cloth."

It would not be fair to either Mr. Kipling or my readers to give any further extracts from the story. It must be read and re-read. I can assure any Freemason who has not read this curious conceit that he has a treat in front of him.

Secret Societies have been common in the East and have been a special feature of Chinese political and private life, but in India the only great society of this kind was the

Thugs who had a regular inauguration ceremony for the reception of officers, and a secret ritual.

Notwithstanding the belief expressed by Kipling's hero and the impression in the minds of many that some form of Freemasonry existed in Asia in olden times, there is no evidence that any distinct organization existed before the Dutch settlement, when Lodges, owing allegiance to the Grand Lodge in the Netherlands, were established some time during the eighteenth century. "After Holland had become incorporated with the French Empire in July 1810, the Grand Orient of France assumed the control of all the Dutch Lodges which then existed, with the exception of those of the Indies, which remained under the obedience which had created them, and which carried on the title of Grand Lodge of the United Provinces of the Low Countries."

English Freemasonry first appeared in India in the days of George II. In 1728, a dispensation from the Grand Lodge of England was issued to one George Pomfrett, but, it is sad to relate, that this Founder of the craft in India is only a name. Nothing whatever is known about him.

Two years later, Captain Ralph Farwinter succeeded in establishing a Lodge which is described as "No. 72 at Bengal in the East Indies." Pomfrett appears to have been appointed Provincial Grand Master of India, and Farwinter succeeded him. Farwinter was followed first by a James Dawson and later by one Zech Gee, but regarding both of these gentlemen, nothing very much is known, but in 1755 the Honourable Roger Drake was appointed, and concerning this brother a great deal is known, but I regret to say it is little to his credit. Drake was Governor of Calcutta at the time when Surajah Dowlah made an attack on the settlement in 1756. Considering the stout-hearted way in which the British usually stood up to the powerful Indian rulers of the day it is remarkable that when the Nawab approached the settlement, contemptible panic seized both the merchants and the garrison of Calcutta. "The stubborn patience and courage," says Minney, "of Job Charnock, who had braved

battle against terrific odds three generations before to lay the foundations of their City, should have served them more nobly at this hour. After a brief attempt at defence, merchants, members of Council, even the Commanding officers of the Army, made a wild dash for the boats. The proud name of Drake was dragged in the dust by the terrified Governor. The boats pulled for the few ships that lay at anchor off our settlement; and the ships speedily made off down the Hughli. From the banks, after the last boats had gone, men and even women pleaded in vain for the vessels to return. Hundreds were left to suffer whatever fate the cruel monarch or his henchmen chose to deal out. Had the garrison remained, it would have been possible for it, and for the militia numbering in all over five hundred, to have put up a brave resistance, and without them it was impossible to hold out."

By deserting his post, Drake seems to have condemned those he left to their fate to the horrors of the "Black Hole," and he was quite properly deprived of his governorship in 1758. Drake was present at the retaking of Calcutta by Clive and Admiral Watson, but it is improbable that he resumed the duties of his Masonic office in the interval between his return to the settlement and his recall to England.

Drake was succeeded by a William Mackett who was present at a meeting of the Grand Lodge in 1760 as Provincial Grand Master of Calcutta and appears to have been succeeded in 1762 by Cullin Smith "at the request of the Lodges of the East Indies." At this period, it was the custom in Bengal "to elect the Provincial Grand Master annually by the majority of the votes of the members present, from amongst those who passed through the different offices of the Provincial Grand Lodge and who had served as Deputy Provincial Grand Master."

As happened in England, the Lodges in Bengal divided themselves into two groups, the so-called "Moderns" and "Ancients." The Provincial Grand Lodge in Calcutta seems

to have worked in perfect harmony with a similar body under the Grand Lodge of Holland which was called the Grand Lodge of Solomon at Chinsura, and the officers and members of the two societies exchanged visits and walked together in processions.

The first Provincial Grand Lodge of Calcutta seems to have assembled for the last time in 1781. Doubtless the war in the Carnatic, which broke out about that time, played a great part in its dissolution, which very nearly caused the end of English Masonry in Eastern India. The only Lodges working in India were at that time in Calcutta and they all closed down with the single exception of "Industry and Perseverance," which nobly determined that its light should not be extinguished, and continued to meet.

The Provincial Grand Lodge was re-formed in 1785 under the presidency of George Williamson, who was installed in March, 1786. In 1789, a grand ball and supper was given by the Provincial Grand Lodge to which invitations were not only sent to residents in Calcutta, but also "to Bro. Titsingh, Governor of Chinsurah, and other Masons of that Colony; to Bro. Bretel, and the other Masons of Chandernagore; and also to the Masons of Serampore, and to the Sisters of these Colonies, according to what has been customary on such occasions formerly."

From this it is evident that French, Dutch and Danish Lodges were all existing at this period in Bengal.

The Provincial Grand Lodge lapsed again about 1792, but was re-established in 1813 when both the "Ancient" and "Modern" Lodges gave their allegiance to the United Grand Lodge of England. Since that year all the Masonic lodges in Bengal have worked under a Provincial Grand Lodge which was revived in that year and renamed the District Grand Lodge of Bengal in 1840.

Although during the earlier days of the British occupation, the presidency of Madras was as we have seen predominant over all the other English settlements in India, no Lodge

was established at Madras until 1752, and it was not until 1766 that Captain Edmond Pascal was appointed Provincial Grand Master for Madras and its dependencies. Here, as elsewhere, in the eighteenth century there was the division into "Ancients" and "Moderns," and two separate Provincial bodies which, however, worked harmoniously side by side. Indeed the two Madras Grand Lodges made an attempt at coalition, long before any such attempt was made by their parent bodies, and seem to have attained a large measure of success.

Like their Bengal brethren, the Masons of Madras gave their allegiance to the United Grand Lodge on its foundation.

It is very interesting to note that the Madras Brethren were the first in the field in initiating Indians, and it is recorded that when the eldest son of the Nawab of Arcot was congratulated by the Grand Lodge on being admitted to the Fraternity, he stated in his reply that "he considered the title of English Mason as one of the most honourable which he possessed." This document is now preserved in the archives of the United Grand Lodge in London.

Bombay was late in the Masonic field, as the first Lodge was not established in the Presidency until 1758. A Provincial Grand Master, James Todd, was appointed in 1763, and he appears to have remained in office until 1799. Unfortunately we know nothing of this masonic pioneer.

In 1801, an Athol Warrant was granted to the 78th foot which was engaged in the Maratha War under the Duke of Wellington, or Sir Arthur Wellesley, as he was at that time. It is recorded that the members of this Lodge took part in the decisive victory of Assaye in 1803.

In 1822, a Lodge known as the "Benevolent" was established in Bombay and Gould tells the following story with regard to this body: "Among the Masons about this time in Bombay were thirteen non-commissioned officers who were too poor to establish a Lodge of their own, and too modest to seek admittance in what was considered an aristocratic Lodge. They met, however, monthly in the

guard-room over the Apollo Gate, for mutual instruction in Masonry. This coming to the knowledge of the Benevolent Lodge, the thirteen were elected honorary members, for which they returned heartfelt thanks. At their first attendance, when the Lodge work was over, and the brethren adjourned to the banquet, the thirteen were informed that refreshments awaited them *downstairs*. Revolting at the distinction thus made among Masons, they one and all left the place. The next morning they were sent for by their commanding officer, who was also one of the officers of the Lodge, and asked to explain their conduct. One of the party told him that as Masons they were bound to meet on the Level and part on the Square, but as this fundamental principle was not practised in the Lodge, of which they had been elected honorary members, they could not partake of its hospitality. The astonished colonel uttered not a word, but waved his hand for them to retire. Ever after this, the Benevolent Lodge—including the thirteen—met on the Level, both in Lodge and at the banquet-table."

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal seems to have invaded the jurisdiction of the Western Presidency by establishing a Lodge at Poona which, however, has left no trace of its existence.

Up till 1836, the English Grand Lodge had complete control of Masonic matters in Bombay. In that year, the Grand Lodge of Scotland carried out a very successful invasion of the English territory. The Brother appointed by the Grand Lodge of Scotland to carry out this campaign was endowed with all the qualities requisite for Masonic proselytizing, "and the strange sight of the English Masons deserting their mother Lodges was witnessed to such an extent that these fell into abeyance in order to give support to Lodges newly constituted under the Grand Lodge of Scotland. In one case, an English Lodge went over, lock, stock and barrel to the Scottish jurisdiction."

In 1844, Burns established a Lodge for the admission of Indian gentlemen, so that the seed planted at Trichinopoly

in 1774 by the initiation of the son of the Nawab of Arcot has borne fruit, resulting in the initiation of thousands of Indian gentlemen of all castes and creeds.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland controls the work of the Order in India through a Grand Master of all Scottish Freemasonry who is elected by the Brethren in India, subject to confirmation by the Grand Master Mason of Scotland.

The Grand Lodge of Ireland has always been the favourite jurisdiction with the rank and file of the British Army and was well known in India, as regimental lodges holding its warrants have been meeting in various parts of the country ever since the arrival of the King's troops in the middle of the eighteenth century. But curiously enough it was not till 1837 that a Stationary Irish Lodge was established. This Lodge was short-lived, and when in 1869 an attempt was made to establish an Irish Lodge in Bombay, the English Grand Lodge objected as it was considered undesirable to create a third masonic jurisdiction in the Province. With Celtic courtesy, the Grand Lodge of Ireland left the field to the English and Scottish bodies and it was not till 1911 that the proposal to revive the Irish ritual in India was renewed. A warrant was then granted for the Lodge of Saint Patrick, and since that year seven Irish Lodges have been established. There is no District Grand Master for the Irish constitution in India, and the Lodges correspond direct with the Mother Grand Lodge in Dublin.

Apart from the Craft, the Mark degree is very flourishing, and there are Provincial Grand Lodges for Bengal, Madras, the Punjab and Burma, working under the Grand Mark Lodge of England.

In the 'eighties the number of lodges in the Punjab had increased to such an extent that a new District Grand Lodge of the Punjab was erected. It was in this District that I was destined to do most of my Indian masonry.

I became a District Grand Officer in 1901 and this was no sinecure, as an effort was made to inspect every Lodge

in the Province yearly and each District Grand Officer was expected to do his quota. Many of us spent our hard-earned "leaves" in going round and inspecting lodges at our own expense.

Kipling's description of the personnel is true to life:

> "We'd Bola Nath, Accountant,
> An' Saul the Aden Jew,
> An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman,
> Of the Survey Office too;
> There was Babu Chuckerbutty,
> An' Amir Singh the Sikh,
> An' Castro from the fittin'-sheds,
> The Roman Catholick!"

They were a motley crowd the brethren with whom I spent many a sweltering evening.

They certainly "hadn't good regalia"; indeed very few brethren possessed any at all, and all who were not District Grand Officers wore aprons and collars belonging to the Lodge and frequently made in the local bazaar.

But those brethren "knew the ancient landmarks and kept them to a hair."

What is irrelevantly called "The Knife and Fork Degree" hardly existed. In cantonments we ran to a slice of cold hump, a glass of beer or a whisky and soda, but we did have some wonderful talks together after the Lodge closed.

> "An' man on man got talkin'
> Religion an' the rest,
> An' every man comparin'
> Of the God 'e knew the best.
>
> So man on man got talkin'
> An' not a Brother stirred
> Till mornin' waked the Parrots
> An' that dam' brain-fever-bird:
> We'd say 'twas 'ighly curious,
> An' we'd all ride 'ome to bed,
> With Mohammed, God an' Shiva
> Changin' pickets in our 'ead."

I do not think people at Home realize what Speculative Masonry has done and is doing to establish mutual trust between Englishmen and Indians.

There is no place where the various Indian races, which I have sketched in previous pages can meet together with a common bond except in a Masonic Lodge.

East and West meet and *mix* "on the Square."

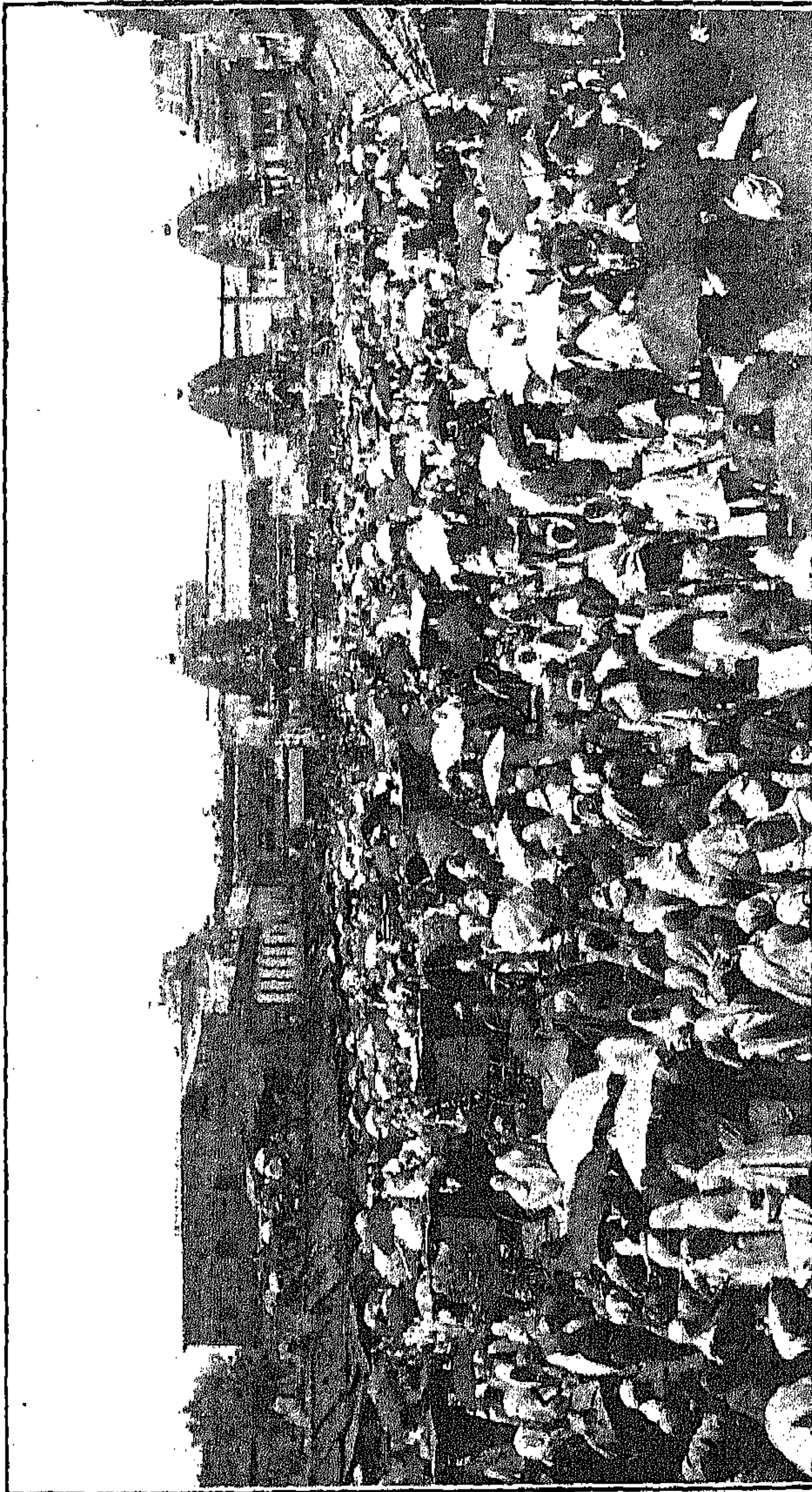
I have seen five volumes of the Sacred Law in use at the same meeting.

They were the Holy Bible, the Koran, the Shastras, the Zoroastrian Writings and the Granth Sahib.

This meant that Christian, Mohammedan, Hindu, Parsee and Sikh were meeting as equals under a common bond of brotherhood.

Nothing else but Masonry could bring together the adherents of such widely different faiths.

Masonry has a great missionary enterprise in all parts of the Empire, and in these days of misunderstandings and racial differences, the Craft can, perhaps, more than anything else bring together men of all creeds and all colours with a common ideal of mutual service in a true Brotherhood of Man.



FESTIVAL OF JAGANNATH, SHOWING THE CAR OF THE GOD

[*Face page* 246

Face page 247]



THE INDIAN POTTER

CHAPTER XXIII

AN ARMY WITH BANNERS

"Thou thinkest, 'I am single and alone!'—
Perceiving not the great Eternal Spirit,
Who dwells within thy breast. Whatever wrong
Is done by thee, He sees and notes it all."

MAHABHARATA.

I HAVE borrowed the title of this chapter from Vera Kingston's inspiring volume which has the almost equally attractive sub-title of The Romance of Missionary Adventure.

This delightful author in her opening pages says: "It has been said that if trade follows the flag, the flag usually follows the missionary. Sometimes it is the missionary who plants it. A very large proportion of the pioneer work of the world has been done by missionaries, and has been purely incidental to their main purpose. This is true of the old explorers—the men who discovered the world as we know it to-day—as it is of Livingstone and his peers. In many instances civilization and trade have only been made possible because the missionary has gone before, gaining the trust of the savage tribes and teaching them something of what practical Christianity means."

This generalization may not apply with regard to India as a whole, but it is certainly true with regard to criminal tribes and to remote corners of India, where Christian missionaries are succeeding where the older faiths have hitherto failed, in bringing new hope and understanding to tribes which were formerly little better than savages.

The late Dr. J. N. Ogilvie in his book, *The Apostles of India*, declares that "beginning with the Church of Jerusalem, there is hardly an important branch of the Christian Church, whether Eastern, or Western, Ancient, Medieval, or Modern, Roman or Reformed, which has not heard the call of India and in some measure responded to it."

The reference to the Church of Jerusalem refers to the persistent and cherished tradition that the Apostle Thomas was the first evangelist of India. It seems certain that St. Thomas visited India and that he laboured in the Punjab, so how he managed to travel so far south as Madras to meet his martyrdom is a hitherto unsolved mystery.

Others of the Apostles are supposed to have visited Northern India, and attempts have actually been made to trace some of the doctrines, ritual and legends of Hinduism, to a Christian origin. Amulets are to this day commonly worn with Syrian and Hebraic hieroglyphics, which the wearers themselves cannot now explain. The forehead marks, so commonly used all over India, are also believed by some to be an abbreviation for Jehovah, and enthusiasts have associated the washing away of sin by baptism with Brahmanical methods of purification.

Be this as it may, on the summit of the Little Mount on the right bank of the Adyar river at Madras, Our Lord's disciple is said to have prayed according to the Jewish custom. There is a church on the Mount built in 1612, and as evidence of Moslem tolerance endowed with thirty-two acres by the Nawab of Arcot. There is a cleft in the rock, which, it is said, was miraculously made by St. Thomas to provide himself with water, and to this day St. Thomas's Fountain provides water throughout the year. On the rocks are certain marks believed by the pious to be the prints of the feet, hands, and knees of the saint, who was praying in a cave below this little hill when he was wounded by a lance. He ran from his attackers to St. Thomas's Mount, where he was killed. His body was carried by his converts to San Thomé, where it was buried,

and his tomb is a feature of the Cathedral which has risen on the site.

The apostle soon found a successor, as in the second century of our era we hear of Pantaenus, a Stoic philosopher who became a great Christian Father of the Alexandrian School, and left Egypt to minister to the Brahmans and philosophers of India. It is stated that he found "Christians acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew, to whom Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached and had left them that Gospel in Hebrew."

About the sixth century the Nestorian or East Syrian Church split off from the Church of the Roman Empire, and displayed splendid missionary effort, filling Asia with its missions. These missions withered away in the Middle Ages, but the Syrian Church on the Malabar coast survived and maintained its existence isolated from the rest of Christendom. It is now split up into four communions and seems to be dwindling in numbers.

From the sixth century to the arrival of the Portuguese the history of the Christian Church in India is a complete blank, but curiously enough one incident connects London with these far-off missionary enterprises.

King Alfred, when the Danes were besieging London, made a vow to send alms "to India and St. Thomas," and he kept his promise by the hand of one Sighelm, who was afterwards Bishop of Sherborne.

Following the Portuguese flag, the Older Faith has never ceased its efforts for the "conversion" of India, and has met with considerable success. There is much in its form of worship which is peculiarly suited to the Indian, and especially to the Brahman. The devotion of its missionaries has never been surpassed. It is missionaries of the Roman Church who still preserve the lance-head which pierced the Apostle's side, and it is their Cathedral at San Thomé, founded by the Portuguese in 1504, which has the reputation of standing over the earthly remains of St. Thomas.

Indeed, there is no more romantic figure in history than Francis Xavier, a friend of Ignatius Loyola and one of the original members of the Society of Jesus. He founded the great branch of the Roman Church in Portuguese India, and the splendour of that Church is indicated by ruins and relics in the Goa of to-day.

Vera Kingston makes the following touching reference to this great apostle of the Indies: The only person who does not seem to have considered that his life was anything but a glorious one was Francis himself. But there is one characteristic remark in a letter to the King of Portugal. Francis was contemplating a journey to Japan, but was meeting with opposition on every side for one reason or another—the danger to himself, the cost, and, no doubt, the uselessness of such an attempt. He writes: "It is almost a kind of martyrdom to look with patience on the destruction of what one has gained with so much labour." And he wonders piteously "how they can have so little faith."

Some of his brethren followed the splendid example of Xavier. Early in the seventeenth century an Italian nobleman, Robert de Nobili, came to India, and consumed with desire to render Christianity Indian for the Indians, he not only learned Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu, but wore the dress of a Hindu holy man and lived in detail the life of a Brahman. His converts wore a caste mark only slightly different from that of their neighbours and a sacred cord, composed of five strands, three golden threads to typify the Trinity and two silver ones to indicate the two natures of Christ. These pioneer Christians adopted the caste system and held themselves defiled by contact with low-caste Christians.

Three Jesuit missions were received by Akbar at his Court and one of the Emperor's sons is said to have become a convert and to have died a martyr's death. Indeed it was impossible for the missionaries not to feel some confidence that the conversion of Akbar was imminent when

they witnessed his reverential treatment of their sacred images and his devout participation in their services. He used to embrace images of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, and keep them a long time in his arms in spite of their heavy weight. One day he attended a Litany service, on bended knees and with clasped hands, like a Christian prince. On the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin, celebrated on August 15, he not only lent his own images—which were of the best kind procurable from Europe—but sent costly silken and golden hangings for the adornment of the Chapel. Both Akbar and Prince Salim exhibited special devotion to the Virgin Mary. The conversion of Akbar did not materialize but it is interesting to find that the two great Hindu dissenting sects of Kabiris and Sikhs sprang into existence about this time and it has been actually suggested that both these "new religions" were founded by Jesuit priests in disguise! The originator of the Kabiris, knowing the instinctive hatred of foreign religions, transferred Jerusalem to Benares, gave the Saviour an Indian name, and tried in every possible way to "Indianize" Christianity.

Similarly in Sikhism, which gained ground at this remarkable period, there are many curious resemblances to Christianity. The Sikhs practise baptism, and celebrate communion by means of wafers and unleavened bread. They employ crosses, tongues of fire, fishes and other symbols used by Christians, but, of course, most of these emblems are older than the Christian faith. The achievement of these pioneer Jesuits was remarkable as settling at the Court of Akbar must have been even more difficult and dangerous than it would be nowadays to commence work in the Court of the Amir of Afghanistan.

One of these early Jesuits called Beschi boldly penetrated to the centre of the Tamil country, adopted a native name and dress, lived like a Brahman, mastered the language, and wrote poems equalling the most celebrated compositions of the native authors. He wrote many books

and accomplished singled-handed results which have, perhaps, never been surpassed for magnitude. His work is the more remarkable that, unlike Xavier, he was cut off in a great measure from Portuguese support, and was obliged to cast himself upon the Indians themselves.

The Jesuits have continued their labours to this day and the Church of Rome has a fine ecclesiastical organization independent of State aid. There are now upwards of two million Roman Catholics in India, of which over 300,000 were added in the last decade for which statistics are available. This great community is governed by no less than eight archbishops and more than a score of bishops, governing no less than a thousand European, two thousand Indian clergy, and probably about two thousand nuns. The European priests almost all belong to religious Orders and come out to India for life. Few officers who have served in India have failed to come in contact with these devoted men, who are splendid examples of self-denying devotion to their creed. Mr. Gledstone pays them a charming tribute when he writes: Picture a newly arrived S.P.G. missionary on his way from Madras to his final destination. A European Roman priest happens to enter the same railway carriage and some conversation ensues. The Roman enquires how long the Englishman's term of service may be, and the Englishman, with some sense of the sacrifice that he is making, replies, "We stay without a furlough for five years." To which the Roman answers, "We stay without a furlough all our lives."

The Reformation was not characterized by any evidence of missionary zeal, and it was not till the eighteenth century that any of the newer churches followed the splendid example of the Older Faith.

The Danish Church was first in the field, sending out two German missionaries, who were succeeded by Christian Frederick Schwartz, who has been well described as a statesman as well as a missionary. So great was his influence with the natives, that the Hindu Raja of Tanjore built

him a church, and assigned him a large piece of land on which to settle his converts. The church is still one of the sights of Tanjore, though it is kept closed, and only one Christian service is now permitted to be held in it every year. He acted as the intermediary between the officers of the East India Company and Hyder Ali, and died in 1798, mourned by Indians and Europeans alike. A splendid memorial to him stands in St. Mary's Church in Fort St. George.

It is a curious fact that the earlier English chaplains employed by the Company took their cue from the officials who frowned at missionary work, and when the Society for Propagating the Gospel began to send out its own missionaries, they were all Prussians!

A few years before the end of the eighteenth century the Protestant religions abandoned the comfortable doctrine that Christ's command to His Apostles about the evangelization of the world had applied only to them, and had ceased to be binding after their death.

In 1793 William Carey sailed for India and not only stirred up missionary enthusiasm, but laid the foundations of those methods which have made the missionary work in India during the last century and a quarter far more important than that of all the previous eighteen centuries.

Carey began his life as a cobbler. The word is his own. He once heard one man talking to another and asking: "Did not Dr. Carey begin life as a shoemaker?" To which Carey himself replied, "No, sir, just a cobbler." He and his colleagues were sneered at in after years by such people as Sidney Smith, who certainly ought to have known better, as the "consecrated cobblers," and, after the manner of Englishmen, they took that term of contempt and converted it into a title of honour, much as our "Contemptible Little Army" has become the "Old Contemptibles," and will go down to history under that name.

From being a cobbler Carey became a preacher, indeed for some time he carried on both callings. Then he became a Baptist minister, and finally he inaugurated the first

considerable missionary movement that had happened in England for centuries. He devoted all his spare time and energy to educating himself and acquired a wonderful degree of scholarship.

Carey arrived in Calcutta in a Danish ship and established himself with two kindred spirits, Joshua Marshman and William Ward, at the Danish settlement Fredericksnager, now called Serampore.

Carey translated the Bible into Bengali and other Indian languages, and the trio succeeding in procuring a printing press, the translations were set up, bound and distributed. It is on record that from the press at Serampore the Bible was issued in forty different dialects.

Carey combined a great deal of business acumen with his missionary zeal, and when the British established a college in Calcutta, he was appointed Professor of Sanskrit, Bengali and Marathi at a good salary.

Carey lived and died in the Danish town which, under a treaty made with the King of Denmark in 1845, was transferred, together with the other Danish possessions in India, to the East India Company for a sum of £125,000.

Carey's wealth was spent in building a splendid college which stands as a memorial of one of the brightest episodes in Evangelist work in India.

Apart altogether from his missionary effort, Calcutta owes much to the great cobbler. He founded the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Bengal, and kept up a splendid botanical garden at Serampore. He also founded and edited a Bengali newspaper and an English magazine, *The Friend of India,* which ran for fifty-seven years. His philological labours include a Sanskrit dictionary and grammar.

There are more than seven millions of Christians in India to-day, and seeing that missionary work has been in operation since 1500, a tale of converts amounting to less than two per cent may seem a discouraging result of over 400 years of contact with European religious thought. But

actual conversion has taken place chiefly among the lower classes and least advanced races. Among the educated classes the influence of Christianity has been indirect, and in many cases has produced a transformation in ethical belief and social conduct as complete as could have been wrought by open conversion. The Brahmo Samaj, for instance, remains Hindu in a sense, because it refuses to sever its connection with India, or to acknowledge European authority in matters of religion. But the Brahmo Samaj could not have come into existence but for Ram Mohan Roy's friendly and intimate acquaintance with European Christians and Unitarians. Even in the matter of conversion, the rate of progress is increasing rapidly, partly because missionary effort is being directed to savage tracts hitherto unvisited by civilized men, but partly, also, because the native Christian community is beginning to have sufficient self-confidence and status to proselytize "on its own." "The multiplicity of missionary agencies, due to the accidents of European history and development, has been an impediment. Such terms as the Church of England, Church of Scotland, Welsh Baptists, American Baptists, and so on, can have little signification for races who cannot be expected to know the historical causes which brought about these local varieties of Christian doctrine and practice. There may yet arise among one of the rival churches in India a Christian Ramanuja or Chaitanya, who may found a great Church of India, with a ritual, and, perhaps, doctrines of its own. The most successful of the Jesuit missionaries, Robert de Nobili, for instance, and such men as the Abbé Dubois in later times, owed their success to the fact that they assumed the habits, dress, and often the titles of Brahmanic ascetics. They could not assume the dusky skin which, after all, is the first and easiest means of gaining an Indian's confidence. They could not wholly accept caste, they could not wink at polygamy in the case of men whose first wives were infertile, and who had an hereditary sense that the lack of an heir is socially and

religiously reprehensible. Perhaps a truly indigenous Church of India may deal with such difficulties more successfully than men who are compelled to teach, not only the elements of the Christian faith, but the ethical traditions belonging to their own race."

The foregoing remarks exclude reference to the work of the Salvation Army, which has adopted methods which are reminiscent of the earlier Jesuits. Its members wear Indian dress, with sandals, and adopt Indian customs.

Missionaries of other Societies have done the same, notably the famous Dr. Pennell, whom I was privileged to meet on many occasions on the North West Frontier. He adopted the picturesque dress of the Pathans amongst whom he laboured, and wore it so naturally that he was often mistaken for a Pathan by Indians and Europeans alike and not allowed to travel with 'sahibs' or to meet his fellow Englishmen as an equal.

Pennell actually undertook a pilgrimage as a *Sadhu* with his disciple, both travelling on bicycles!

He gives a humorous account of this journey in his well-known book *Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier.*

The attitude of the modern missionary is very different from that adopted by their predecessors within my own memory. There is no attempt to ram Christianity down the throats of the cultured Indian, and no one can fail to read the publications of the Church Missionary Society and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, to which I am much indebted in these pages, without being impressed with the respectful attitude of the writers towards the religious thought of India, Hindu and Mussulman alike.

The achievements of the missionaries in providing medical help in out-of-the-way places, has made a strong appeal to the humanitarian instincts of all Indians, and the provision of a rational religion for the outcastes and the aboriginals is recognized as useful national service.

The C.M.S. sums up the position in the following graphic words: "All fresh efforts aim at making the approach more

Indian and avoiding any tendency to denationalize our fellow-subjects. The vocational schools where those duties and trades are taught which will fit boy or girl for their native life; the emphasis laid on vernacular, rather than English, in the curriculum of the schools; the co-operation of the Hindu in the missions to students and the training of Indian workers of all kinds, are steps paving the way for the ultimate withdrawal of the foreign missionary in favour of the Indian teacher—a goal still distant, no doubt, but the goal nevertheless."

The modern missionary is a great and helpful influence in the problems of modern India, and I cannot do better than close this chapter with the words of a great Indian soldier with whom I have been privileged to serve both in India and in France—Sir Claude Jacob, G.C.B., G.C.S.I. Speaking recently at a School speech day, the Field Marshal said that "during his long service of fifty years in the Army, he spent 43½ years in India, most of it on the North West Frontier. He had met many members of the C.M.S., S.P.G., and other missionary societies, both clergy and medical men and women. They had been and were to-day great Empire-builders, men and women who by their devotion to the cause of the suffering poor and ignorant in many foreign lands had brought the blessings of Christianity to them all. What wonderful examples of unselfishness and high endeavour their lives presented! The Empire has many calls on you," he concluded, "and one of them is very urgent, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.'"

CHAPTER XXIV

LETTERS, LEARNING AND THE DRAMA

> "There is no country where the love of learning had so early an origin or has so lasting and powerful an influence."
>
> DR. F. W. THOMAS.

THERE can be no sort of doubt that ancient India was a home of learning.

Dr. Muthu asserts that besides schools and "Forest Colleges," where the Indian sages sat in the cool and scented shade beneath a dense canopy of green foliage, and gave instruction to the students on the deeper problems of life, there were university centres for a higher education, such as Benares, Ujjain, Taxila, and Nalanda, where professors taught logic, literature, arts, medicine, philosophy, and religion. Each university specialized in one branch of knowledge. For instance, Benares University was famous for theology; Ujjain, the Greenwich of Ancient India, for astronomy; Taxila for medicine, and Nalanda for Vedic and Buddhist teaching. As a matter of fact, the schools of medicines and universities were great non-sectarian monasteries for the study of both scientific and religious subjects. The fame of these universities spread far and wide, and attracted students from China to Rome.

The University of Nalanda in Behar seems to have been a remarkable institution as it was so richly endowed by kings, princes and even common people that no less than ten thousand students received not only their education but their board and lodging free!

Chinese pilgrims have left glowing accounts of the ancient Indian seats of learning and the tolerance of the Hindu

people is demonstrated by the fact that it is recorded that both secular and sacred subjects were taught side by side. "Besides mathematics, philosophy, literature, and science of the arts and crafts, religion also was taught, the religious study including both Mahayana Buddhism and Vedas and Shastras of the Brahmans."

The teaching staff included strangers, from whom arts and sciences were learnt.

"On the students were enjoined the free and fearless pursuit of truth, meditation on the plan and purpose of life and creation, and respect and regard for high and low alike, and appreciation of whatever was good in other lands and in other people. The cardinal truth taught was the doctrine of Karma or Cosmic justice—that human life is but the working out of man's own action—an iron law which, in spite of its many attractions, has been a terrible blight and has cast its dark shadow of despair and hopelessness over millions of lives in India, over hundreds of centuries."

But all its old culture had disappeared and India was a welter of warring clans when England became the paramount power.

It was and still is a Tower of Babel with two hundred and twenty-five languages and at least as many dialects. There is no *lingua franca*, and the residents of one village are frequently unable to make themselves understood by their compatriots in a village a few miles away. I well remember the utter despair of my bearer, a Punjabi Mussulman, on arrival in Madras only half a dozen years ago. He spoke no English and was unable to make known his simple requirements either in my hotel or in the bazaar.

It was this confusion of tongues which led Macaulay to write his famous minute which decreed that English was to be the medium of education in India. For weal or woe this decision has determined the whole trend of Indian education for the past century. English books have been studied, English ideas absorbed and western thought poured

into the channels of Indian life thereby remoulding Indian culture.

From very early ages India has had schools carried on in accordance with Indian ideas. To-day most villages have a school of sorts, in which the village schoolmaster imparts some little knowledge to a few boys. If they are Brahman boys they study Sanskrit, and learn to read and write the sacred characters. A great deal of time is given to memorizing sections of the Vedas or other sacred books. But these schools are of the old order, and are passing away before the steady advance of education on Western lines.

In thousands of villages there are now little mission schools in which Indian teachers give elementary instruction. In some cases the tiny children learn to write their letters in the dust on the ground, writing with a bit of stick or with the fingers. In other schools wooden slates are used, on which the boys and girls write in a black pigment with a reed pen. It must be confessed that many of these elementary village schools are not as efficient as their organisers would like them to be, and often the children are taken away from school and put to work before they have made much headway.

Bishop Whitehead has declared that "The famous minute of Macaulay, published in 1835, which finally turned the scale against what were called the 'Orientalists,' has often been regarded as the Magna Charta of Indian education. It would be more reasonable, I think, to describe it as its evil genius. It abounded in fallacies and was based upon ignorance. It switched off the educational policy of Government to wrong lines and has been responsible for a great deal of the political trouble of the last forty years."

But notwithstanding such strictures, it must be admitted that when the system of education formulated by Macaulay and Bentinck was transferred to Provincial authorities in 1921 it had achieved a great deal although it had been abundantly evident for years that the existing system of

primary education had failed in the campaign against illiteracy.

That eminent authority Mr. Arthur Mayhew says more than half the total expenditure on boys' primary schools is wasted because so many pupils fail to complete the primary course, and a large percentage of those who do complete it show by their examination results that they have got no permanent profit from it. Irregular attendance, a short school life, and the obstacles to efficiency existing in the numerous single-teacher schools are as disastrous in their effects as the educational apathy of the agricultural classes. It is these classes, and to a lesser extent the unskilled labour classes in the towns, that constitute the problem. In populous areas the "literacy" castes and those who need education for a livelihood are being enrolled and taught with an ever-growing measure of success. But 74 per cent. of the population is agricultural, and 70,000,000 live in small villages where, under existing conditions, efficient education is wellnigh impossible.

But if elementary education remains a problem for development by the Indian administrator it cannot be said that secondary education has been neglected.

Since 1900 the number of universities in India has grown from five to fifteen. There are more people receiving college education in India than in Great Britain. Some of the new universities confine themselves to the teaching and examination of students concentrated in the academic area. The other universities, with fewer colleges, distributed over a smaller area, to superintend, and freed by school certificate boards from most of their matriculation work, are beginning to direct and influence collegiate teaching. University chairs have been established, and research work advanced. Constitutional reform on lines suggested by the Calcutta University Commission is having its effect on administrative and academic functions. But these favourable conditions for the advancement of learning and sound instruction of competent students are impaired

by the claims on their resources made by those who crowd into the colleges without any bent for academic studies or hope of ultimate success. Of those who complete the secondary course, 59 per cent., and in Bengal 80 per cent., proceed to the universities. The corresponding percentage from aided secondary schools in England and Wales is eight!

The Indian colleges which provide training for the liberal professions and technical departments of the Government are well organized and provide excellent curricula.

It has been asserted that Indian education is top heavy, and that the provision of higher education is out of all proportion to the elementary work.

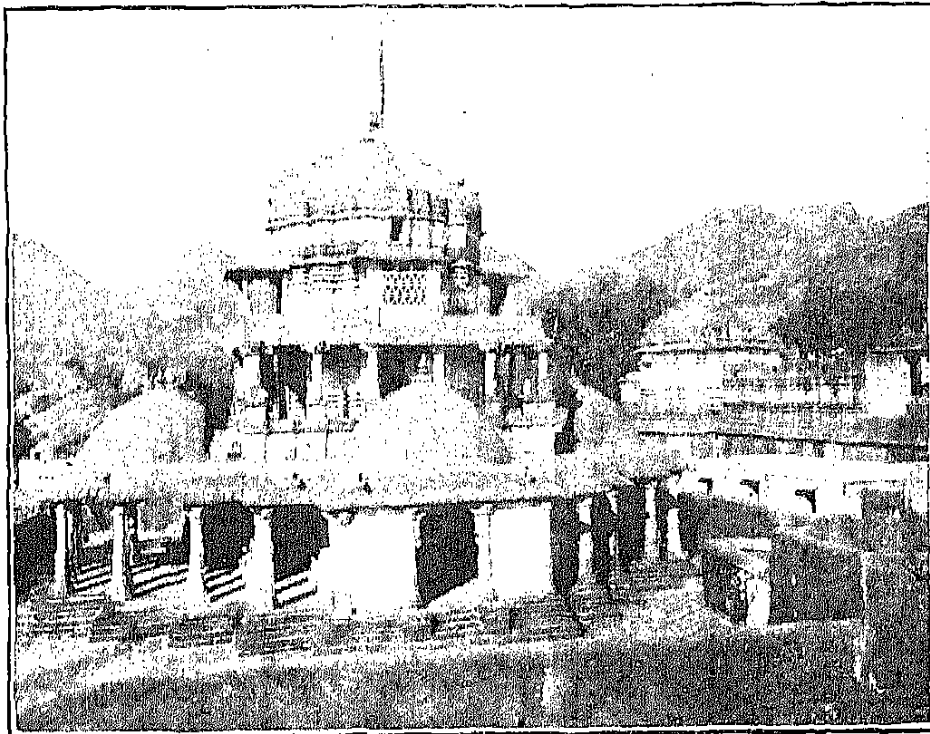
The great weakness of the top heavy educational system is that very large numbers of the men who go to college take the literary course in the belief that it will lead to Government service or to the legal profession. The result is that the number of Arts students vastly exceeds the possibilities of employment, and many have difficulty in finding a sphere of work.

"What is needed," says Mr. Mayhew, "is not the conversion of schools that supply at present a foundation for academic studies and professional training into vocational schools, but a closer co-ordination of general with vocational education, a richer variety of secondary schools, and the means of diverting boys at definite stages from thoughts of Government service or the liberal professions into other equally honourable careers."

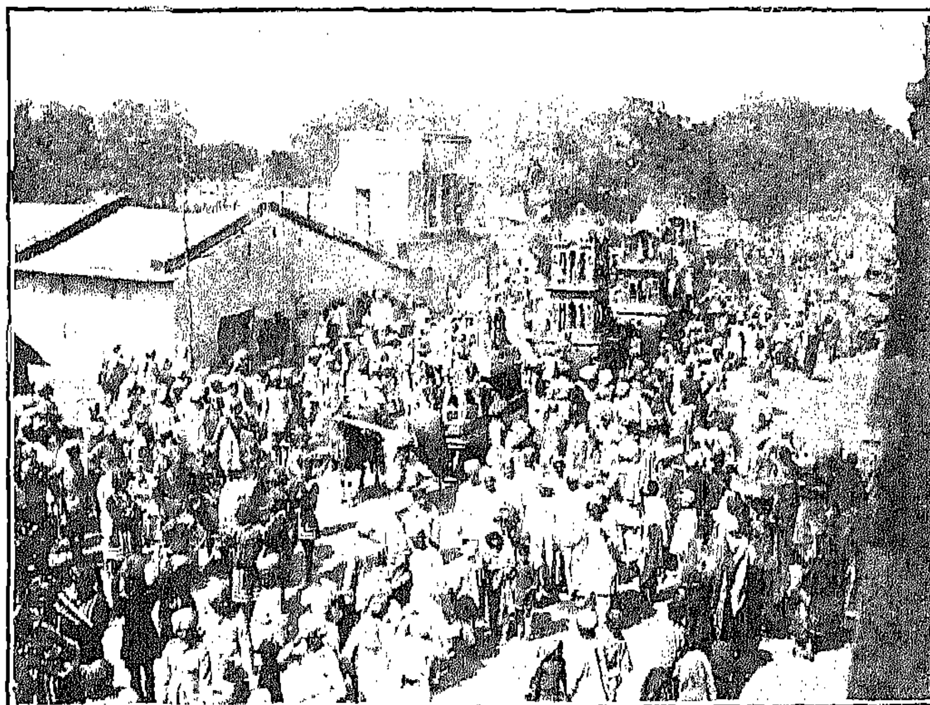
If the campaign against illiteracy among males has been unsuccessful the results of the attempts to educate women have been deplorable.

In 1921 only eighteen per thousand of Indian women could read and write, but owing to an increased school enrolment of thirty per cent. the Census of 1931 shows an improvement to twenty-nine per thousand.

"In no province does more than one girl in five attend school, and two-thirds of the primary school pupils spend



ANCIENT JAIN TEMPLE



[By kind permission of the S.P.G.

A HINDU FAIR

[Face page 262



A Country Town Bazaar



[By kind permission of the S.P.G.

Indian Villagers

Face page 263]

only one year there. The average number of pupils in the top class is two. The short school life, irregular attendance, and quite inadequate supply of competent teachers, deprive most pupils of all permanent benefit. With only 7,000 girls in the high school stage, and less than 2,000 women in university classes, the training and supervision of staff for even a small fraction of the school-going population of 18,000,000 is difficult. The quality of higher education for the daughters of Hindustan is, however, steadily improving, and a gallant handful of educated Indian ladies is beginning to exert an influence on public opinion which is bound to have profound and widespread results. Much has been done to make higher education more attractive and accessible to the Mohammedan and Anglo-Indian communities," but, with regard to the "depressed" classes, educational effort has been most ineffective as not more than five per cent. of the children of school age are attending any institution, and higher education is still for this large body of the Indians only a name.

The provision of special schools for this section of the community is open to criticism as a concession to class prejudice but, stimulated by the example of the mission schools, there are now societies that show in their aims and methods the influence of Western ideals on thoughtful Hindus.

Mayhew pays a splendid tribute to the mission institutions which have been an important and integral feature of Indian education since 1854. "In 1921 nearly 20 per cent. of the scholars enrolled in Madras Presidency were in these institutions, and 14 per cent. of the total expenditure on education was from mission funds. They have been pioneers in agricultural settlement work and have drawn from the Government of India, which officially takes no cognizance of religious instruction, a declaration of the value of education based on religious foundations. In all stages of educational work they have won the confidence of India, and there are no signs that they will lose under Ministers and

Councils the support they enjoyed under the old regime. Aided institutions under other management are growing in number and usefulness. But too many depend mainly on grants and fees. They will not acquire the stability of mission institutions until non-Christian benefaction becomes relatively as important an educational asset as the endowments and subscriptions raised by Christian missions."

The quotation which I have placed at the head of this article is cordially endorsed by Dr. N. Macnicol, who adds that "In few lands can the climate and the soil be more friendly to the growth of a great literature."

The vehicle of India's ancient letters and learning was Sanskrit and a knowledge of this gift of the gods gave prestige to priest and layman.

"It is only within the last six or seven centuries that a literature in the vernaculars has arisen, and that literature was until recently almost wholly poetical in form and religious in subject. Before a modern literature could arise it was necessary to create the prose medium that it should mainly use; it was necessary also to transform the whole literary outlook by introducing new themes and new vehicles of literary expression. The very contact that came so suddenly and in such abundance between the old cultural modes and those brought to the land by the invasion of the civilization of the West produced at first bewilderment and paralysis. The process of assimilation of the new literary influences and of readjustment to new literary ideals was of necessity slow. In some areas, such as Bengal, where the minds of men are supple and agile, this readjustment has been more rapid than elsewhere. In some other areas we are only seeing around us now the emergence of a new literature that is more than an echo of foreign voices and that is beginning to wield the vernacular weapon with a real accomplishment."

The emergence of the new nationalism in India has given birth to new literary activity and India has now its own

poets, dramatists and novelists who are no longer lifeless echoes of Western voices.

To mention only the great Bengali man of letters, Rabindranath Tagore, in the opinion of one of his interpreters, Mr. E. J. Thompson, "Kalidasa and the Vaishnava lyrics have chiefly influenced his poetic growth, and only after them Western literature. 'The Bengal Shelley' is no echo of anyone but a poet, and a man of letters who, internationalist as he is, is essentially the possession of his own land and his own province."

It is claimed that the new spirit in India is producing a great literary revival and that what has happened with regard to the two great vernaculars of Eastern and Western India, Bengali and Marathi, is happening in almost every other vernacular tongue.

Research is taking place in the older Indian languages, and Indian history is being re-written from the Indian point of view.

"The drama also has an immense vogue in the India of to-day as an instrument of propaganda, whether in the cause of Nationalism or of social reform. Babu Harischandra, of Benares, who is credited with the production of 175 Hindi works, has been called 'the founder of the modern drama in India.'

"That there is to-day a new vitality in the literatures of all the great vernaculars of India there can be no doubt. What Messrs. Chenchiah and Bhujanga Rao say of Telugu applies far beyond that area: 'The reanimation of fading energies, the rekindling of hope—in short, the rekindling of youth and vigour—are among the spiritual gains of contact with worldthought.' The soul that is being reborn in the land is finding utterance, and accordingly the vernaculars are everywhere awaking to new life."

CHAPTER XXV

THE BROWNS, SMITHS AND ROBINSONS OF INDIA

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."
SHAKESPEARE.

THERE is nothing more confusing to Western eyes and ears than the names of our Indian fellow-subjects, so it may be of interest and utility to my readers to devote a few pages to showing that names in Hindustan have been adopted on exactly the same lines as surnames have been acquired in Europe. I will show that the Hindu takes his name from a colour, bird, metal, or quality in just the same way as Mr. Brown, Mr. Jay, Mr. Silver, or Mr. Strong have come by theirs in this country.

From what has been said with regard to the population in previous pages, it will be readily understood that Hindu names predominate in India. There are three kinds of Hindu names—personal, family and professional. The personal names denote either a relationship, a colour, a quality, an animal or bird, a metal, gem, mineral, or other material object, a river or a deity. It is interesting to see from some examples how names have been derived from these sources.

The belief in the re-birth of departed kinsmen lends popularity to such names as Babaji, Bapu Lal, Bhai Shankar and Jijibhai. These words signify various relationships combined with honorific titles which will be explained later.

Colours are just as popular in Asia as in Europe, and common examples are the well-known names Pandu and Arjuna meaning white, and Krishna, black.

There are numerous names signifying an attribute or quality, such as Bhimi, meaning terrible; and the warlike races, the Rajputs and Sikhs, all use the name Singh, which signifies a lion.

Indians are often called after animals or birds, and such names as Shunaka, signifying a dog, Nakula a mongoose, and Shuka a parrot, are common. A woman who has lost many children gives her later offspring ugly names, such as Keru, rubbish, and Ukirdu, a dunghill, to make them less attractive to the evil spirits she suspects of having robbed her of her firstborn.

The precious metals and stones are much in evidence, and names abound such as Hira, a diamond; Ratna, or Ratan, a jewel; Sonu, or Chinna, gold; and Velli, or Belli, white metal or silver.

We have seen how the Indian reveres his great rivers, and it is not surprising to find that he calls his womenfolk after them, so that many dainty little Hindu girls are named Ganga, Godaveri, or Kaveri.

The high-caste Hindu loves to speak the holy names as frequently as possible, so names his children after the gods. The names in the Hindu pantheon are numerous, sonorous and picturesque. In consequence there are thousands, if not millions of Hindus called after Rama, the delighter, Lakshmana, the lucky, Narayana, the producer of the first living being on the primeval waters, Ganesha, the god of good luck, and Bhama, the god of the glowing heart.

When a Hindu rose in importance, he added to his personal name a family or caste name. Formerly the caste name "Sharma" was added to the personal names of Brahmans, "Varma" to Kshatriyas, "Gupta" to Vaisyas, and "Dasa" to Sudras. Now Dasa means a servant, and the proudest Brahman does not disdain to call himself the servant of a god; so they have taken this name to themselves, and in the Bombay presidency high-caste Hindus frequently add "Das" to their names.

Honorific additions, prefixes and suffixes, abound in the Indian languages, and must be understood to appreciate the meaning of Indian names. The favourite additions are the name Ram, from Rama, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, and Nand, Chand, and Lal, all signifying the fourth son of a Rajah. These flowery little words delight the Hindu heart and are constantly added to personal names, especially in Northern India.

The title of Babu is so universally applied to Indian clerks, that it has come to be regarded as synonymous with writer. Strictly speaking, it means the fifth son of a Rajah, and is constantly tacked on to Hindu names. Colloquially, it has gradually acquired a meaning equivalent to the English "Mister."

Baba, Lala, Sodhi, Pandit and Raja have become favourite honorific prefixes, and "Ji" is a popular suffix used in addressing superiors. It is to be found in many Indian names, such as Ram*ji*, or Jamshed*ji*. Its feminine equivalent is Bai and Devi, which are constantly used by Indian women.

In Bengal the names Mudaliyar and Nayadu signify "leaders" and were assumed by castes of political importance under Indian rulers.

Swami, which appears at the end of so many Madrassi names, signifies master, owner, lord, husband, or proprietor; and another common name in Southern India, Chaudhuri, is derived from the title of a subordinate revenue official under native rule.

Desai, Deshmuh, common family names in the Western Presidency, are derived from the titles of officials in the old Mahratta kingdom.

The Brahmans have many titles indicative of their profession of studying and teaching the sacred books. As symbolic of their caste they add Aiyer, Iyer, or Aiyangar to their names in Madras; in Bengal Mukerji; and in other parts they use Shastri, Acharya Bhat, Bhattacharya and Upadhyaya.

The common Bengali names, Bose, Gose, or Ghosh, Dutt, Mitra, Jen and Guha, simply indicate the caste or clan of their bearers.

The Sikhs and Rajputs, as pointed out above, all add the word Singh, which means lion, and is meant to signify their warlike attributes.

The Sindhis use the suffix "mal," which means brave, and is designed to convey the same idea.

The common Madrassi name Chetty is of considerable interest, as it signifies the Master of a trade guild.

The title Raja strictly means a Hindu Chief, but is often adopted by landless persons. It has many variations: for instance, it is used in the form Rao in South and West India, and as Rai in Bengal. It has no caste significance. A family frequently adds "Kar" or "Wallah" to the name of its native town or village, and adopts the compound as its family name.

The word Jam signifies a Chief in one of the Indian languages; hence the term Jam Sahib, the present title of the famous Indian cricketer, Ranjitsinghi.

A number of Hindu families have descended from village accountants. The common names Patwari, Karnam, and many others, have this significance.

As in Europe, most Hindu family names denote a profession, trade, or place of origin. For instance, an Indian directory will bristle with such names as Mehta, Kulkarni, Deshpande, Chitnavis, Mahalnavis, all of which indicate that the owners at one time were officials of the old rulers of India.

India has its thousands who owe their names to the fact that their forbears sold grain, made shoes, or dealt in liquor, just as we have them in this country. Other names signify the town or village from which the family traces its origin, just as in Europe.

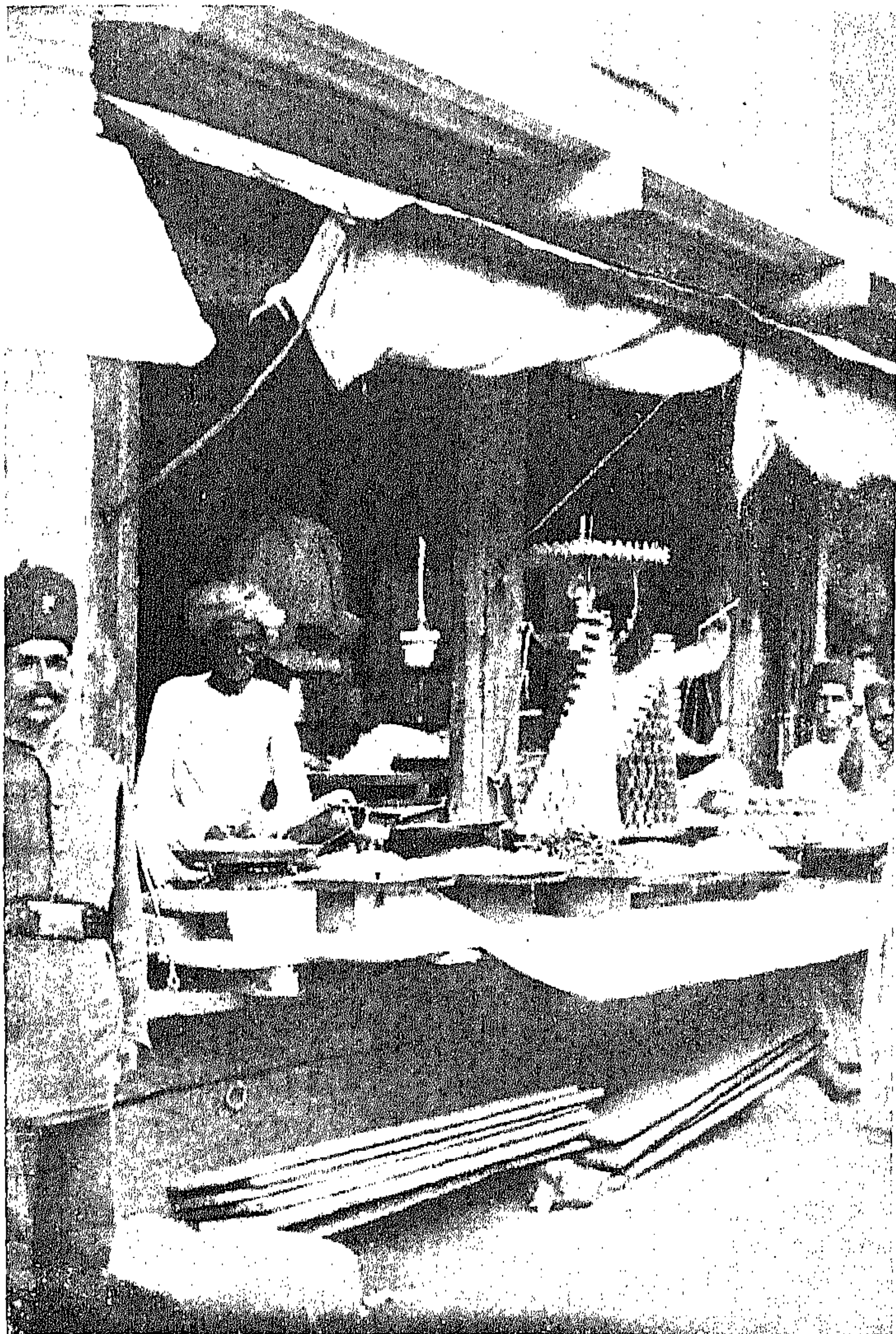
It is common in Western India, but rare elsewhere, to insert the father's name between the personal and family name.

Unlike Europe, however, where names have long ceased to have any association with the individual, an Indian peasant's name may give a considerable amount of information about him. For instance, a man called Vasudev Pandurang Chiplunkar, would be a Hindu whose personal name was Vasudev, whose father's name was Pandurang, and whose family name—derived from the village of Chiplun—was Chiplunkar.

The evolution of Mussulman names has developed on different lines to the Hindu names, which, in many cases, they have replaced, as it must be remembered that a large percentage of Indian Moslems were converts to Islam during the Moghul rule.

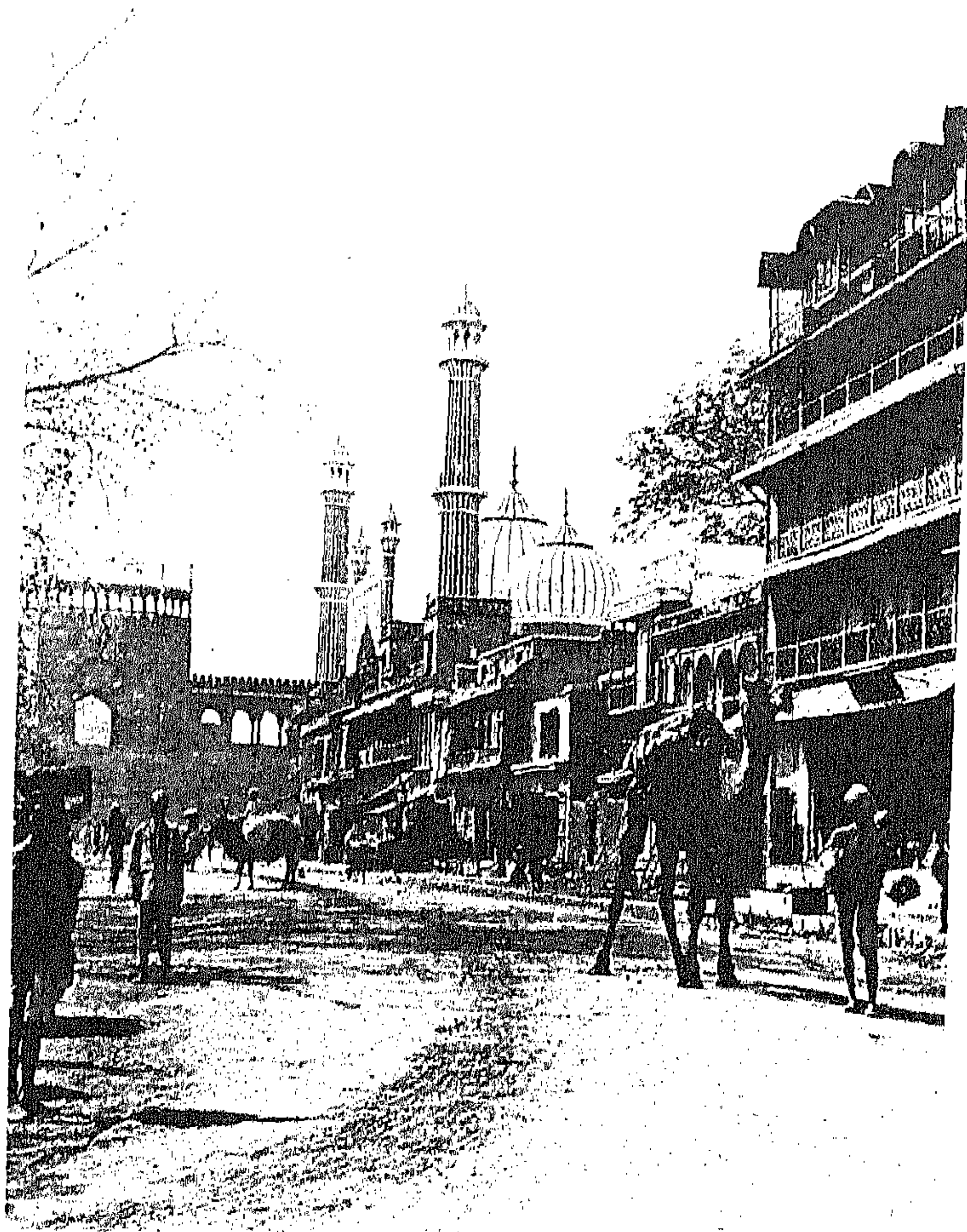
Naturally the members of a militant faith have adopted names derived from that of the Prophet Mohammed, a name which is spelt in a great variety of ways; the names of Moslem saints, and the secular history of their great religion.

They are very fond of Baksh, which means a gift; for instance, the common Mohammedan name Khuda Baksh means the gift of God; and the word "Din" which denotes "the Faith," and is piously added to many names. Fateh, meaning victory, is naturally a favourite in an essentially military religion; whilst Ghulam, signifying a slave, corresponds to the Hindu "Das," and of course means a slave of the Prophet. Haji is a coveted title which can only be used by a follower of Mohammed who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca; whilst Khwaja is in favour with the upper classes, as it indicates a man of distinction, a gentleman. Fakir is largely used and means a religious Moslem who has taken a vow of poverty. Kasi, or Qazi, is familiar to students of the *Arabian Nights*—it means a judge—but is proudly used by many Moslems who have no right to it. Syed, or Saiyed, is equally proudly employed by those who claim to be descendants of the daughter of Mohammed; Munshi is far more lowly, indicating merely a writer or teacher; while Sheikh, a word which signifies not only a



A Sweet Shop

[*Face page* 270



Street Scene in Delhi

Face page 271]

chieftain but an old and respected individual, is much used.

To the names of Mohammedan women are usually added the terms Begum and Bibi, signifying a lady or mistress.

The Mohammedans have various honorary terms which they add to their names, such as Khan, which originated as the title of the ruler of a small Mohammedan kingdom. It is highly prized, especially by landless Moslems of Afghan or Pathan descent.

Maulvi, like Mulla, signifies a person learned in Mohammedan law, and Maulana is adopted by sons of Islam skilled in Arabic and in religious knowledge.

Mirza and Sultan, which were formerly the titles of kings or noblemen, have now simply the significance of Esquire.

Pir means a Mohammedan religious teacher or saint, and Mean and Wali are favourite variations of Mirza and Sultan, which have no longer any real significance as titles.

The Parsees take their personal names from their sacred or secular history, and their family names from the profession of a forbear or their native town. Mehta is one of their commonest "surnames," and Patel, which signifies the head man of a village invested with some magisterial and revenue functions, is also very common.

Some years ago the Parsees were compelled to adopt distinctive family names, and they promptly adopted English words and phrases, such as Contractor and Doctor, and Readymoney, and combinations of English words or place-names, with the Urdu word "wallah," which has wide significance, meaning agent, inhabitant, owner, or possessor.

More rarely the Parsee takes his family name from his native place without any addition. Hence the "surname" of the great Parsee clan—Bilimoria.

The Indian Jews to which I have referred, stick to their Hebrew names, and I have before me an address presented

to me by the Colaba Settlement which contains such names as Aaron, Reuben, Solomon, Isaac, Ezekiel, and Joseph.

A number of Anglo-Indians proudly bear high-sounding Portuguese names, which are derived from the original Portuguese conquerors and present no difficulty; but even an elementary knowledge of the meaning of the names of our Indian fellow-subjects will add a zest to a study of Indian literature, and enable the visitor to feel more at home in his intercourse with Indians during a visit to England's Great Dependency.

I have tried to show that, after all, Indian are in origin very little different to Western names, and that we have the equivalents among the teeming millions of India of our own Browns, Smiths and Robinsons.

CHAPTER XXVI

SWORDS IN THE JUNGLE

"The ends of the Earth were our portion,
The ocean at large was our share,
There was never a skirmish to windward
But the Leaderless Legion was there."

KIPLING.

DURING the last years of the eighteenth century, most of India had fallen into a state of chaos terrible to behold in a country which laid some claim to civilization. The Imperial throne was little more than a shadow, and all the provinces had fallen away from their allegiance, some becoming independent under usurping satraps, and others, such as the Carnatic and Bengal, passing under the control of European Powers. In these latter peace and a sort of orderly administration were entering; but elsewhere pillaging, sacking and murdering were terrorising the countryside. We have it from an eye-witness that every man lived as in a forest of wild beasts, and owed his safety only to the strength of his own heart and arm.

The wretched villagers did their best to cultivate the land, and over them were two classes of rulers who were to some extent educated. The leaders of the Hindus were the Brahmans, descended from their Aryan forefathers; while, on the other hand, were the Mohammedans ruled over by the Maulvis who claimed descent from the Arabian Sayyids and Shaikhs. Each creed had two divisions of military members, the Rajputs and Marathas on the side of the Hindus, the Moghuls and Pathans on the side of the

Mussulmans, and between these classes raged a deadly enmity.

It was a curious period. Amongst the warring princes who gave nominal adherence to the great Moghul was Mahadoji Sindhia, a great Mahratta Chieftain. In 1784 he was voted to the Supreme Power by his brother chiefs, and appointed Prime Minister, and granted the Provinces of Delhi and Agra by the Emperor for the upkeep of his army.

For some time ambitious Indian leaders had been looking for some superior force by which they might extirpate their antagonists. Sindhia at this juncture had an opportunity of observing "with what majesty the British soldier fights." He saw an opportunity of making his troops superior to those of his rivals, and decided to obtain a few reliable European officers who would train and discipline his troops to the efficiency of "a lance with a steel point." The supply of Europeans was not plentiful, but sooner or later a few British, or Indo-British, and French officers became available. "These men cut loopholes in the jungle with their swords, admitting a little air and light."

The first and not the least notable of these "Swords in the Jungle" was Benoit Boigne, the son of a respectable burgess of Chambéry in Savoy. He entered the service of Louis le Bien-Aimé at an early age, and was posted to the regiment of Lord Clare in the Irish Brigade. There he laid the foundation of his knowledge of English which was afterwards to stand him in good stead. Whilst still on the active list of the French army, he took furlough and placed his sword at the service of the Empress of Russia in her campaign against the Turks. At the conclusion of peace between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Captain Boigne made a favourable impression on the sentimental Catherine, who sent him on a mission to the East. On an eventful journey, he made the acquaintance of the eldest son of the Duke of Northumberland, who gave him letters of introduction. He went first to Egypt, but having decided to visit India he eventually arrived at Madras. Armed with Lord Percy's

letters he had a very favourable reception, and was given a vacant commission in the 6th Native Infantry.

This meant that the adventurous young Frenchman had succeeded in securing a commission in three great European armies before he was thirty years old!

His connection with the Madras army was brief; he was engaged in a disastrous little campaign against the Moslem usurper at Mysore, after which he resigned his commission and set up as a fencing master.

He then remembered his commission from the Russian Empress, and found his way to Calcutta and later on to Lucknow in the camp of Warren Hastings.

He was a true soldier of fortune, willing to sell his sword to the highest bidder, and readily entered the service of Sindhia.

Boigne organized Sindhia's army on a new model and carried all before him, but this was not all. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to evolve order out of chaos in the civil administration of the country. He finally established himself at Aligarh with an army at his back of thirty-thousand men, the virtual master of a region as big as France and Germany put together.

The manner in which the General carried on his various duties has been set forth by an eye-witness: "I have seen him daily and monthly rising with the sun, to survey his factories, review his troops, enlist recruits, direct the vast movements of three brigades (providing for their equipment and supplies), harangue in Durbar, give audience to envoys, administer justice, regulate the civil and revenue affairs, hear letters from different parts, and dictate replies, carry on an intricate diplomatic system, superintend his private trade, examine accounts, direct and move forward a most complex machine." This same writer adds that no European was employed by the General to aid him in civil business.

Under such a strain it is not surprising that Boigne's health broke down and as he had accumulated a large fortune, he obtained leave of absence to Europe from his

nominal master, Sindhia. In 1796, the erstwhile penniless adventurer left Aligarh for ever with a treasure chest bursting with gold and jewels, and a bodyguard of six hundred Persian troopers, superbly armed, horsed and equipped, a small camel corps mounted on high-bred animals, and a battery of light guns, the whole of this splendid escort being Boigne's own private property.

Boigne sold this little army to the East India Company who paid him a handsome sum and gave liberal terms of engagement to the officers and men.

The General left India an invalid, but a rich man. His ship brought him to the Thames at the end of 1797, and he made London his headquarters till things had settled down in France after Waterloo. He then transferred his headquarters to Paris where Louis XVIII made him a count.

He married, but his marriage was not a success, and he finally settled in Chambéry, where he devoted himself to good works and died full of years and honours in 1830.

In sharp contrast to Boigne, who came to India with the prestige of having held commissions in the famous Irish Brigade and the Imperial Russian Army, is the case of George Thomas, a roving Irishman, who arrived in India as a Quartermaster of a Man-of-War. After being engaged in four inconclusive sea fights between the British and French, Thomas deserted in 1782, and after an obscure period of adventure in the Carnatic he appeared at Sardhana, near Meerut, where that famous woman, the Begum Sombre or Samru, was the virtual queen of a large area which had been given to her reputed husband, William Reinhardt, for the maintenance of his legion in the Imperial Service.

Reinhardt was a Walloon, who came out to India in the French service and became the leader of a band of European deserters and Sepoys, whom he raised to a remarkable standard of efficiency and discipline.

Reinhardt took the name of Sombre and conferred on himself the rank of General. He had a Moslem wife, and the Begum was only a favourite slave girl whom he had pur-

chased at Delhi. She became a Roman Catholic and appears to have gone through a form of marriage with Reinhardt and to have been a woman with remarkable military instincts, as when besieging a place called Gokargurh, the Imperial Forces were taken by surprise by a sortie from the garrison and the assailants penetrated to the centre of the camp where the Emperor was himself reposing in his tent. The Begum in her palanquin, attended by Thomas with three battalions and a field-gun, successfully repelled the attack of the garrison. The Emperor's person was saved, the defence turned into a rout and the place was carried in the rush of the pursuit. The credit of the day was justly awarded to the valorous lady, and she was publicly thanked by the Sovereign and honoured by the title of Zeb-un-nissa, meaning "Glory of the Sex."

It seems probable that after this exploit Thomas was a candidate for the lady's favour, but was ousted by the superior attractions of a rival, a French officer whom the Begum afterwards married. Thomas left the Begum's service and established himself under British protection at Anupshahr on the frontier of the territory of the Nawab of Oudh. Before long he obtained employment under a Mahratta chief who was in charge of the Gwalior district. Under this wandering chieftain Thomas obtained considerable distinction, and the Rajah showed his gratitude by adopting Thomas as a son. Meanwhile, the Begum was having rather a bad time with her new husband, and they cleared off from Sardhana one morning with as much portable property and hard cash as they could carry, but unfortunately they were pursued and the Begum stabbed herself with a dagger. Thinking she was killed, the pursuers followed her husband who put a pistol to his head and shot himself. The Begum's wound, however, was not serious, and she recovered. She was a woman of shrewd ability, and, after keeping up a good understanding with the British Government, her forces were eventually received into British pay. She died in 1836.

Thomas broke more or less new ground by going on an expedition against the Sikhs who were, at that time, little more than a predatory horde of badly-horsed marauders. He acquitted himself with skill, and became a man of mark, but unfortunately would not link up his fortunes definitely with those of Sindhia as he preferred to run a solitary course.

In 1797, we find Thomas established as Rajah of Hariana, with headquarters at Hansi. Here, he told his biographer, Colonel Francklin, was his capital, where he rebuilt the decayed city walls and strengthened the defences of the fort. "As it (the town) had been long deserted, at first I found difficulty in providing inhabitants: but by degrees I selected between five and six thousand persons to whom I allowed every lawful indulgence. I established a mint and coined my own rupees, which I made current in my army and country, as from the commencement of my career at Jhajar I had resolved to establish an independency. I employed workmen and artificers of all kinds . . . cast my own artillery, commenced making muskets, match-locks, and powder; and, in short, made the best preparations for carrying on a defensive and offensive war."

Thomas saw that the field in Hindustan was occupied by stronger powers, and the sailor-Rajah looked in the direction of the Punjab. "I wished," he said afterwards, "to put myself in a capacity of attempting the conquest of the Punjab, and aspired to the honour of planting the British standard on the banks of the Attock."

By 1799, Thomas had successfully borne down all opposition to his authority and consolidated his power to the further part of the Province. He executed a very successful expedition against the Rajputs and by 1799 was back again at Hansi.

At the end of the cold weather he renewed his campaign against the Sikhs and realized from his expedition something like £20,000. Thomas, at his zenith, was the dictator of all the countries south of the Sutlej. Unfortunately, he



Photo: Craddock

A Great Sikh Prince

[*Face page* 278



A great Woman Military Adventurer.
The Begum Sombre, or Samru

Face page 270]

was his own worst enemy, offending his neighbours by reckless raiding, defying all authority, and, occasionally at least, indulging too freely in intoxicating liquor.

It is interesting to record in these days that notwithstanding his birth in Tipperary, George Thomas was always a very loyal British subject. "I have nothing in view," he said, "but the welfare of my country and King. I shall be sorry to see my conquests fall to the Marathas; I wish to give them to my King."

Thomas withstood a long siege in his capital, but was overwhelmed by greater forces, and in 1802 he died at Bahrampur, in, it is believed, his forty-sixth year.

This Tipperary bog-trotter trained on board a man-of-war such as is described by Smollett in his novels is perhaps the most picturesque figure which came to the fore in this remarkable period of Indian misrule. "To have risen in a few years from the forecastle to be the leader of an army and the ruler of a State, must needs have demanded no common gifts and exertions; and we may perhaps see in this forgotten wanderer more than the germs of a true hero." He was tall and handsome, a master of the Hindustani idiom, and able to read and write Persian; and, what is much more, he was true, generous, and brave, and a patriotic subject of that Empire of which his native island was, is and must be, De Valera notwithstanding, a most important part.

When Thomas fell, another ex-mariner, Pierre Cuiller, who had assumed the title of "General Perron," succeeded to power. Perron became the Commander-in-Chief of the Regular Corps in Sindhia's service, and there was great similarity between his origin and that of the Irish Rajah, Thomas. He deserted from a French ship, and showed his facilities for work in the service of Mr. Sangster, the Scots gun-founder, who procured him a post as sergeant of infantry; but his further promotion was due to his industry, which—according to Smith—was such that "his pleasures arose from the labours of his profession." Perron acquitted

himself as an energetic and able commander in the field, but his civil administration was in sharp contrast with that of his great countryman, De Boigne. His attention was mainly directed to the collection of the revenue, which was done by the help of large bodies of troops kept at hand for the purpose. In the event of recalcitrance on the part of landholders a severe and early example was made, the village of the defaulters being plundered and burned, with bloodshed on occasion. In the department of justice matters were no less summary; there were no rules of procedure and neither Hindu nor Moslem law was properly administered. The suppression of crime was treated as a negligible quantity; the Amil, or District Officer, sent in his report on any special case and acted according to such orders as Perron chose to send back. As to rating of land, there was nothing of what has since been known as "Settlement"; the Amil took what he could get from the landholder, and the landholder got what he could from the cultivators. No one dared to build a handsome masonry house, or to celebrate a showy wedding, or give silver bracelets or bangles to the females of his family; such things would have only served as signals to the chartered spoiler. The well-to-do accumulated what they dared not enjoy, to bury it underground and often die without having revealed the place of its concealment. Every considerable landholder had a sort of unauthorized custom-house—Sayar Chabootra, as it was called—where goods in transit paid such dues as the rural magnate deemed available. Besides this, he derived an income from shares in the booty taken from travellers by professional gangs of gipsies and predatory tribes. The obstacles to commerce were completed by disbanded soldiers who roamed the country. What wonder if—as in the days of the ancient Deborah—"the highways were unoccupied, the travellers walked through byways."

By the beginning of 1802 Perron had attained his zenith, having brought all Hindustan into subjection, and being

regarded as suzerain by every chief—Hindu or Moslem—from the Sutlej to the Narbada. His demeanour now underwent a total change. Surrounded by flatterers, he gave all his confidence to Frenchmen, like Louis Bourquin, and actually sent one Descartes as Envoy to France to seek the alliance of First-Consul Bonaparte, then on the eve of breaking the short-lived Peace of Amiens. Some conception of the enormous resources acquired by the sailor-soldier may be guessed when we realize that in addition to the twenty-seven districts which had formerly been assigned to Boigne, he had four large estates in the Delhi territory; seven fiefs which he had "resumed" from their previous owners; twelve districts west of the river Jumna and other property yielding under the crude management of the period an annual revenue of over four millions of rupees, say four hundred thousand sterling. This vast domain was his own personal property apart from his official pay and allowances and the whole patronage of four brigades. Perron was diametrically opposed to his brother blue-jacket—Thomas—as he aimed at securing French supremacy, but after an unsuccessful struggle with the British, he gave himself up to General Lake, and ultimately returned to France in 1806 with a considerable fortune. He bought the Château of Frasnes, in the Vendôme country, and like his old comrade, Boigne, passed the eventide of a strenuous life in quiet munificence.

The beginning of the last century sounded the death knell of the Free Lances of Hindustan, as in 1803 Sindhia entered into an agreement with the British Government to employ no European or American officers without the knowledge and consent of the British Government.

In addition to these condottieri who spent their lives in the service of Indian princes two men must be mentioned who, starting in other camps, transferred their allegiance to the British and have left their names as a precious heritage to the Indian Cavalry of to-day.

James Skinner was born about 1778, his father being a

subaltern in the British Army in Bengal and his mother a Rajput lady "with whom the subaltern had a transient intimacy."

Skinner refused to be apprenticed to a Calcutta printer, and joined up as a private spearman—in one of Sindhia's regular regiments of infantry—in which he eventually obtained a subaltern's commission. Skinner at first bore a grudge against his father's race and served in a little war against George Thomas. He eventually found his way into the camp of General Lake where he was kindly received and soon distinguished himself as a leader of cavalry.

Skinner adopted a curious canary-coloured uniform, which to this day is perpetuated in the corps by which his "yellow-boys" are still represented in the Indian Cavalry —Skinner's Horse—the 1st Duke of York's Own Cavalry. His troops developed a speed and endurance which was very remarkable. They travelled with a saddle-bag containing a handful of meal for food, a blanket and a brass pot, and soon attained renown as dashing swordsmen. Skinner and his "Horse" served in the Burmese war, and were ultimately engaged in the final operations against the Marathas.

James Skinner after an eventful life settled at Hansi with a Lieutenant-Colonel's commission in the King's army and the Third Class Order of the Bath.

In sharp contrast to Skinner who spent his early life more as a Rajput than an Englishman, was William Linnaeus Gardner, an Irish gentleman and the nephew of a distinguished naval officer. Gardner obtained a commission in the Royal Army at the age of eighteen and after some time obtained a company in the 30th Foot, now the 1st Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment.

Gardner did not find sufficient scope for his martial ardour in his British regiment and speedily resigned his commission to enter the service of Tukaji Holkar. He married a Moslem lady, the daughter of a Nawab of Cambay and whilst in the service of Holkar acted as an intermediary

between the Prince and the British Commander with whom the Mahratta army had come in conflict. He was unsuccessful in his mission and on his return Holkar insulted him, with the result that, using his own words: "Drawing my sword, I attempted to cut Holkar down, but was prevented by those about him. Ere they had recovered from their amazement, I rushed from the tent, sprang upon my horse, and was soon out of reach of my pursuers."

Gardner and his cavalry were taken into the British service and his regiment was afterwards incorporated into the Company's Army. It is still represented in the Indian Army List as the "2nd Lancers (Gardner's Horse)."

Gardner settled down in India with the wife of his youth, and his offspring were married to natives of the country.

The story of these adventurers throws a vivid light on the India of the eighteenth century. Keene quotes a Russian journalist who says: "In reality the English have been the saviours of India. During whole centuries the history of India presents one continual spectacle of murder and devastation. The bloody era closes with the occupation of the country by the English, whose rule has been incomparably more mild, humane, and just than any government under which the Indians have ever lived."

Keene adds: "The social air of India is as degenerating to foreign virtue as her physical climate is relaxing to foreign strength. This truth holds through every department of life, and in all periods of Indian history. The breed of Indian horses is not maintained in beauty and vigour unless good sires and dams are imported from time to time. Without continual sowing of new seed, fruit and vegetables turn to weeds in the best tended gardens. We have seen how rapidly the Greeks in India decayed when communication with Europe was cut off. The same thing happened under the Moghul Empire. The men who followed Babar from Turkestan were white men, with ruddy cheeks and fair hair; a Spanish traveller, so late as the fourth

generation after Babar, noted the 'rutilous' beauty of the Moghul ladies whom he met at a dinner-party; 'fairer,' he said, in his high-flown Castilian way, 'than any that the frigid Boreas engenders.' The Moghul Emperors adopted the generous policy of employing native Moslems, and even Hindus, when they could find men of those classes fit for high command: yet they never failed to employ as many of these white immigrants from Central Asia and Persia as was at all possible. At length, after the reign of Mohammed Shah (who died in 1748) the Empire fell into confusion; the Punjab became a cockpit for Sikhs and Afghans; immigration ceased; the Moghul State fell into the ruin we have seen—for want of fresh northern blood it perished of anæmia."

Is history ever to repeat itself?

CHAPTER XXVII

WHO GOES WHERE?

"Lo! I have flung to the East and West
Priceless treasures torn from my breast,
And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.

Gathered like pearls in their alien graves,
Silent they sleep by the Persian waves,
Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,
They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,
They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance,
On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders and France."

The Gift of India.—SAROJINI NAIDU.

THESE words by a political poetess have found an echo in Indian hearts, and there can be no sort of doubt that as a result first of the moral effect upon Imperial opinion of India's contribution to the Great War and secondly, of the immense stimulus to democratic ideas resulting from the course of the conflict, the national movement in India has assumed since 1919 a form at once more definite and more far-reaching than it had previously known.

The momentous declaration in the House of Commons in 1917 which laid down as the goal of British Rule in India the progressive realization of Responsible Government of the kind enjoyed by the self-governing Dominions was followed by what are known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, which provided a first step towards the attainment by India of Responsible Government.

India to-day is, as we have seen, in a state of transition which is bewildering to those of us who know it well.

The peoples of India have been welded into some semblance of a nation by the genius of the British peoples and are on the march to an unknown goal, but they carry with them their old ideals and their old customs, and it is startling to find that preachers of progress are burdened with ancient prejudices and an antiquated outlook on life.

Contact with the West has brought to India all the fruits of modern civilization such as railways, postal services, telegraphs, telephones, wireless and modern printing facilities, and the Indian public has seized those advantages with both hands.

Not a single one of these latter-day developments owed at their inception anything to Indian thought, Indian industry or Indian capital. They were due to Western workers and Western genius, but they are now being employed against their donors.

Similarly, democratic ideals and self-determination of the peoples are due to the fertile brains of gifted Europeans, but they have been absorbed by Indian minds and have swept over India, changing the whole political fabric of the country.

The Reforms of 1919 have failed to satisfy Indian aspirations, and the British Parliament and the Ministers of the Crown have been faced with a problem which is undoubtedly the most formidable that has ever tested the genius of the British people, as on its solution may well depend not merely "the permanence of the connection between the Indian and the British peoples, but also in no small measure the future peace of the world. The impending struggle between East and West, foretold by many persons who cannot be classed either as visionaries or as fanatics, may easily be mitigated or even entirely averted, if the British Commonwealth of Nations can find a place within its wide compass for 350 millions of Asiatics fully enjoying the privileges, and adequately discharging the responsibilities, which at present characterize the



The Ekka or Indian Jaunting Car

[*Face page* 286

Face page 287]



An Afridi



An Old Mahsud Waziri



A Member of a Local Levy of Shinwaris

Martial Races of the North-West Frontier

Photos: By courtesy of Lt.-General Sir George MacMunn

inhabitants of Great Britain and the self-governing Dominions."

Into an India stirred by international strife and suffering from post-war restlessness came a magnetic figure in the form of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, whose parents were of the Bannia caste. He was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple and practised law in Bombay, Kathiawar and South Africa. Gandhi was in charge of an Indian Ambulance Corps during the Boer War and the Zulu revolt in Natal. During the Great War he conducted a recruiting campaign in the Kaira district. Gandhi having employed passive resistance with success in a political campaign in South Africa, determined to employ the same measure in his native country. His opportunity came in 1919 when he headed a campaign against the so-called Rowlatt Bill, and from this sprang the spark which fired the Punjab and caused the conflagration which has embittered the political atmosphere of India ever since.

In September, 1920, Mr. Gandhi obtained entire domination of the Indian National Congress which was founded in 1885 by Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service. The objects of the Congress were the fusion into some sort of homogenous body of the different and discordant elements which constitute the population of India; the gradual regeneration, along all lines, mental, moral, social and political of the nation thus evolved; and the consolidation of union between England and India by securing the modification of such of the conditions as might be unjust or injurious to India.

The Congress pursued an uneventful career until 1907 when a split occurred between the Extremist members and the older generation. The Congress was not reunited until 1916, and from that year onward till 1920 the union effected was merely superficial. In that year Gandhi obtained control of the Congress and since then its political development has been so rapid that by 1927 it had adopted independence as the goal of India. With the Congress solidly

behind him, Gandhi's policy of non-co-operation met with a great measure of success, and he rapidly acquired among his Hindu co-religionists the authority with which India envelopes a saintly ascetic.

Gandhi realized, however, that the support of the Hindu community was not enough, so he laid himself out to obtain a similar influence over the Mohammedans. He succeeded and then set to work to bring the British Government to their knees. This he endeavoured to accomplish by inducing the public to withdraw their co-operation from the elaborate system of administration which had been gradually developed under the British flag. He persuaded a large number of his followers to resign their titles and honorary offices, to withdraw from all government positions, including positions with police and military forces, and to suspend payment of their taxes.

Gandhi gained a very wide measure of support in these efforts and by the autumn of 1920 he was raised upon a wave of sentiment by both Hindus and Mussulmans to a height which no Indian leader has ever previously attained. To quote an official document: "Considering all the circumstances the wonder is not that his influence extended so widely, but that there remained in India even a section of opinion which was not carried away by his personal character and by his public aims."

By 1922, Mr. Gandhi's eyes were opened to the fact that it would be impossible to maintain a non-violent atmosphere under the tense conditions which had developed, his control over the non-co-operation movement had no longer its former power and the Administration at last decided on the step that had been long contemplated—to order his arrest. He was accordingly sentenced to undergo imprisonment for six years.

As time went on the Non-co-operation Movement proved unsuccessful, and, strange to say, in 1928, it received a a knockout blow at the hands of the very author of its being, Gandhi himself. But the scheme was dormant and

not dead, and in December 1929 Gandhi re-introduced it with renewed vigour and in additon declared the complete independence of India.

Early in 1930 Gandhi was appointed "Director" for all India by the Congress, with the power to launch civil disobedience as and when he chose. He did so in March and the result was open defiance of the law throughout the country notwithstanding the efforts of the Government to maintain order. Towards the end of the year the movement weakened and civil disobedience was suspended early in 1931 resulting from the negotiations between the Viceroy and Gandhi, and efforts for peace were carried to the point of inducing Gandhi to take part in the Round Table Conference in London to formulate a constitution for India.

Meanwhile the Simon Commission had been appointed, but unfortunately its report was not acceptable to the majority of Indians, and this added to their lack of faith in the Government's intentions. Gandhi's new methods were more successful than his earlier ones as the scheme of non-payment of land revenue was very popular, as it coincided with the *ryots*, that is the peasants', incapability to pay. The breach of the Salt Act, boycott of all foreign cloth and of British goods, and the no-tax campaign were also easier to practise than his old dodge of boycotting law-courts and schools.

Demonstrations of people singing revolutionary songs led to serious conflict with the police in some places, with the result that trade and commerce were largely paralysed and import and export figures and railway returns showed a steady downward trend.

Gandhi inaugurated a further civil disobedience movement in his famous march to the sea with the object of evading the salt laws and defying the Government. On April 6th he actually picked up salt on the sea-shore without paying duty and the police did not interfere. His followers started to manufacture salt which was afterwards

sold in small packets all over the country. The law-breakers raided salt works, and the unfortunate devoted Indian police were mobbed and murdered in broad daylight and Government buildings and law-courts were set on fire.

Nor was the work of the Congress confined to India proper. By means of persistent propaganda the martial races of the North-West Frontier were taught to hate the British and to expect the establishment of "Gandhi Raj" at an early date.

One of the features of the campaign against the British took the form of picketing shops. This work was reserved for women, who as we have seen, for the first time in the history of politics in India, joined the movement in response to Gandhi's appeal. The managing director of a well-known firm of booksellers in Bombay told me the other day that his business has been ruined by women standing outside the entrance of his shop telling everyone not to enter. The women usually stood quite quietly and simply said, in the vernacular to all who approached the shop: "Don't go in." But in some places, coercion replaced peaceful persuasion, and the public were put to very great hardships in order to obtain the ordinary requirements of life. The Viceroy was accordingly obliged to issue an Ordinance making picketing punishable.

The strongest ally in the spread of Mr. Gandhi's movement has been the vernacular Press, and it is a curious fact that followers of Gandhi, who have always preached non-violence, have become active revolutionaries. Arms have found their way into the possession of hot-headed youths, and numerous attacks have been made on Government officials. Bombs have been thrown, and attacks have actually been made on Government stores of arms.

The proceedings of the Round Table Conferences are so recent and so familiar that they need only a passing reference. Briefly stated, the result of the First Conference was to set up a number of Committees. The return of

Gandhi from this Conference without having achieved anything substantial has resulted in a renewal of the political struggle in the country followed by his arrest and imprisonment.

In such an impasse it is interesting to recall a statement made by Mrs. Annie Besant only ten years ago: "I submit that India, independent and alone, will recommence the old story of invasions and subjections, and must at once begin to prepare for these by increasing her huge military expenditure in preparation for the near withdrawal not only of British troops, but of the great protection of Britain's mighty name. As part of a great Commonwealth, the strength of the whole Commonwealth is her defence. As she rushed to the defence of Britain, overmatched in Europe, so would the Nations of the Commonwealth rush to hers, if she were atacked from outside. Britain's navy is still the largest in the world, and that navy will be a sister-guardian of her long coast-line, even after she has created a navy of her own. All the strength of the Commonwealth will be at the call of every Nation in it, and that knowledge is sufficient to protect."

She continues: "To break the British connection would mean not Freedom but only a change of masters, for Japan is armed cap-à-pie, her population is over-crowded and needs an outlet; India, at present, cannot defend herself alone, and Japan would seize the hour of her weakness. To declare Independence now would be madness, and Britain would not be foolish enough to protect, while Independent India was preparing for future self-defence. She would either clear out at once, and leave India to be overrun, or would try to hold her down by force, while encouraging dissensions among her people, to the ultimate ruin of both great countries. For without India, Britain would fall from her position as the greatest of World-Powers, while with India, and possibly re-linked with the United States in close alliance, she would lead forward the evolution of Humanity for centuries to come."

There are the words of a woman who loves India and has spent her life in its service.

I do not associate myself with Mrs. Besant's remarks regarding Japan or with her view that Britain could ever encourage dissensions amongst the peoples of India, but I do feel that the general trend of her advice should be carefully studied by all thoughtful people.

I must insist that India was merely a geographical expression until she was welded into the beginning of a nation by the genius of British administrators, and that it is due to the love and help of Britain that the great sub-continent can be described as "Incomparable India."